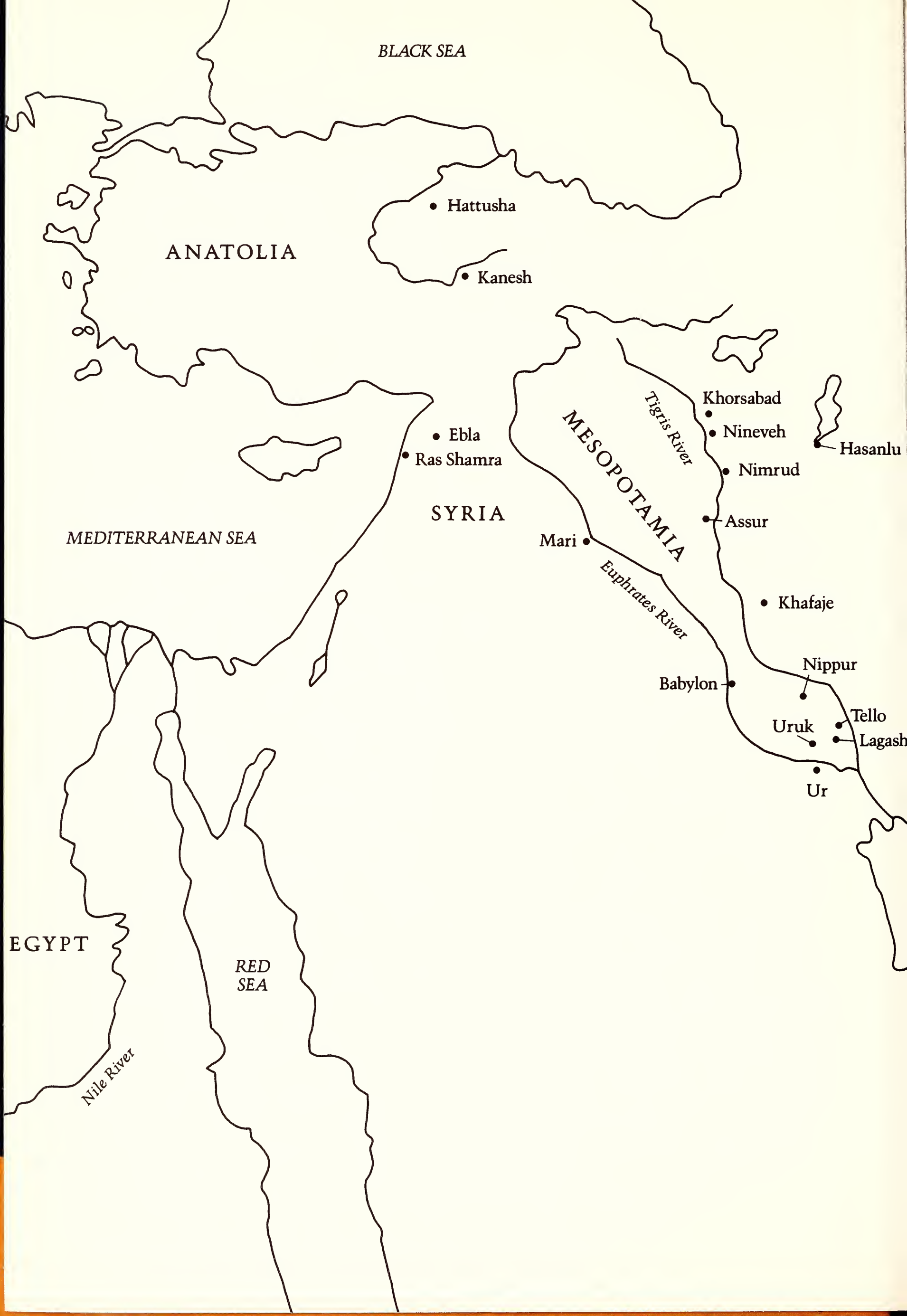


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PUBLICATIONS

INVESTIGATING ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENTS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

EDITED BY ANN C. GUNTER





BLACK SEA

ANATOLIA

• Hattusha

• Kanesh

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

• Ebla

• Ras Shamra

SYRIA

Mari •

MESOPOTAMIA

Tigris River

• Khorsabad

• Nineveh

• Nimrud

• Assur

• Khafaje

Nippur

Babylon •

Uruk

Tello

Lagash

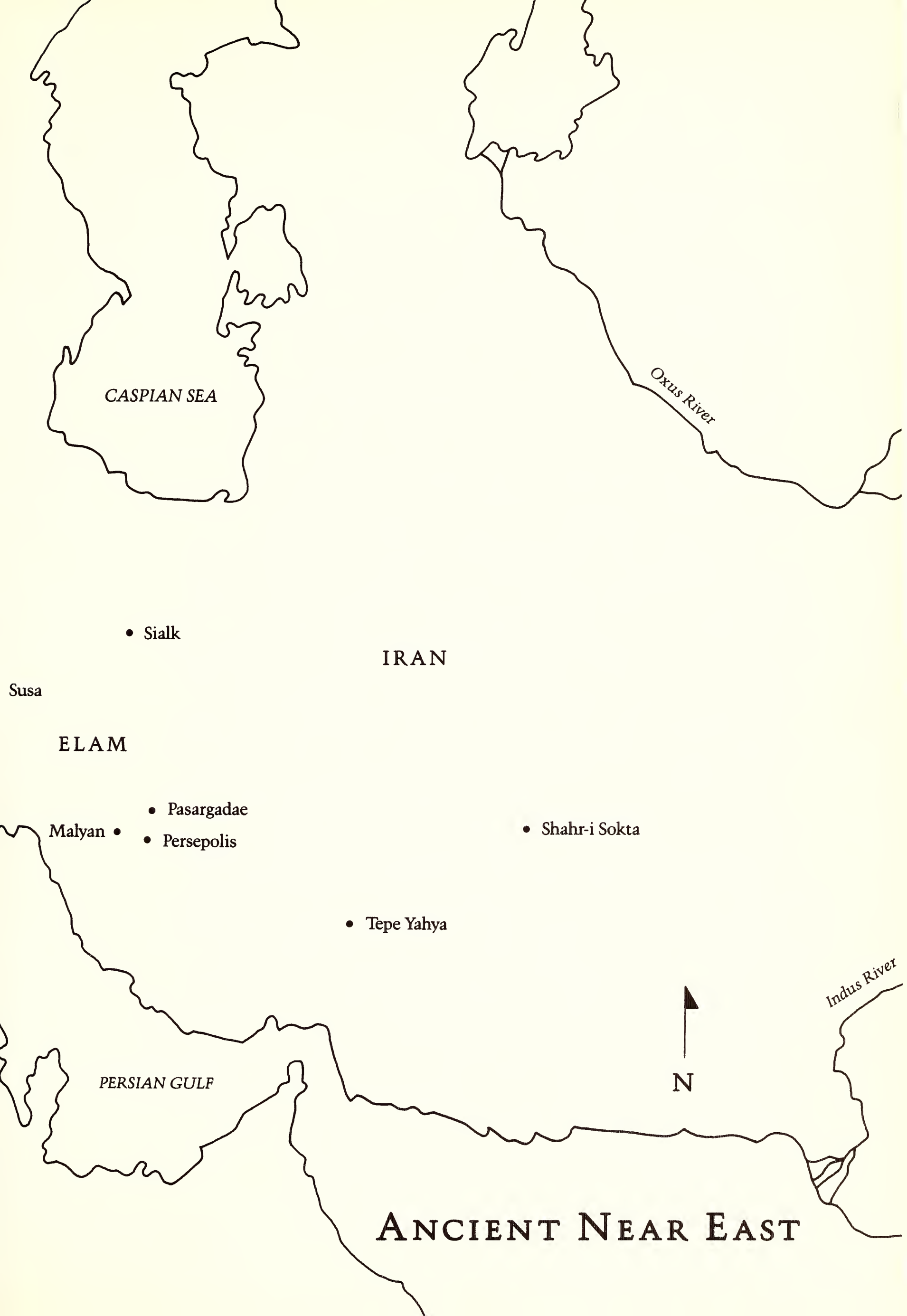
Ur

Hasanlu

EGYPT

RED
SEA

Nile River



CASPIAN SEA

Oxus River

• Sialk

IRAN

Susa

ELAM

• Pasargadae

Malyan •

• Persepolis

• Shahr-i Sokta

• Tepe Yahya

PERSIAN GULF



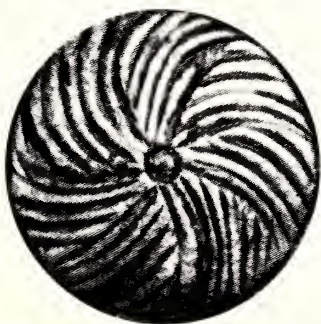
Indus River

ANCIENT NEAR EAST



INVESTIGATING ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENTS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

EDITED BY ANN C. GUNTER



Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C.

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1990

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FOREWORD



THIS VOLUME PRESENTS ELEVEN REMARKABLY SIGNIFICANT AND varied essays examining the social contexts of works of art and the processes of artistic creation. The authors initially delivered their papers at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in 1988, at a symposium intended to nurture a broader understanding of ancient Near Eastern objects than is usually supplied by their presentation in an art museum.

Why, then, did this event take place at an art museum? More specifically, why at the Sackler Gallery, a building next to—and soon to be connected with—the Freer Gallery of Art, a museum which, like many other institutions, has long upheld the idea that impartial viewing and quiet contemplation of artistic masterpieces are acts complete within themselves, that masterpieces and their interrelationships form a self-explanatory, closed value system.

I am not here to contradict that. I hope we have all seen objects—or heard music, or read poetry—so powerful that they seemed to be microcosmically complete. There is a well-articulated body of opinion stating that one does not need to know anything about Bach and his time to perceive the full power of the *Goldberg Variations*.

On the other hand, this seems to assume that there is a body of things called “art” which communicates with us in a unique and independent way. This also supposes, it seems to me, that the idea of “art” is universal and either that all works of art can communicate directly to all people, or that one need not be concerned if one’s audience is limited to those who *can* perceive the formal power of such works. And it is the power of their forms that is most important.

The now fashionable concern for context, however, contrasts with the traditional role of the art museum as an exhibitor of objects. This is not to deny that many art museums have long promoted research into the social and historical setting of the objects in their care. But no matter how hard they try, neither the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery nor any other art museum can ever *exhibit* the original context of a work from the past. This is a particularly pointed issue, for there are people who believe that no museum should acquire or exhibit works—archaeological materials especially—for which information about original context is unavailable. Apparently for many, the context and not the forms ultimately determines an object’s importance. This controversy is of concern especially in the field of ancient Near Eastern art, where so much material has been illicitly unearthed and sold on the art market.

Over the years, I have been both fascinated and disturbed by the limited ways whereby students develop sufficient curiosity or commitment to begin studying the artistic and cultural traditions of Asia. Most (although, luckily, not all) undergraduates with whom I have come into contact became interested in the material because of family ties, youth or schooling in India or Japan, or friends, and not because of a direct, unanticipated personal response to objects alone. And it remains true that contact through the Peace Corps has motivated a number of Americans to establish professional ties to Asia. My limited sampling reveals how important communication with a distant geographic area often is for the development of concern and sympathy for its culture. With knowledge or experience of context, the details of that culture—and the arts are one such detail—are often made more comprehensible and enticing.

To an exhibition of archaic Greek sculpture, many Americans of European origin bring an inevitable, if unconscious, contextual awareness, a background similar to that brought to the Sackler Gallery, a museum of Asian art, by visitors of Asian origin. The average European-American visitor to the Sackler, however, brings no such sensitivity. Moreover, many Asian works were never intended to be appreciated according to values assumed by the European-American museum public: formal or material beauty, age, or historical importance. Therefore, unless an Asian museum in the United States wishes to remain elitist or is content to present its collections as exotic *curiosa*, it must work to establish an appropriate contextual understanding for objects on exhibition; to the degree that museums allow objects from Asia to be used to reinforce well-entrenched and misleading Europocentric attitudes, they are irresponsible.

In this controversy between object and context, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery has chosen the Middle Path. The gallery will explore contexts through exhibition techniques, symposia, publications, educational materials, and other means, with the goal of enhancing, rather than ignoring or denying, the visual power and communicativeness of the objects it collects or exhibits. These objects *are* powerful; not just because they are expensive or rare or technically difficult to make, or were once the property of an emperor, or even because they may be beautiful, but because they extend our awareness of the diverse and challenging ways in which our world can be experienced.

The success of this symposium may be attributed to Ann C. Gunter, assistant curator of ancient Near Eastern art. She organized the meeting and ensured that its proceedings would be preserved in this publication. She has shepherded the papers through many stages, and we value the outcome. We are especially grateful to Mrs. Arthur M. Sackler for her generous support of the symposium and of this publication.

Milo C. Beach

Director

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art

PREFACE



TO CELEBRATE THE INAUGURAL EXHIBITION OF ARTHUR M. SACKLER'S gift of ancient Near Eastern art, a symposium was held in April 1988 at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

In the absence of direct or detailed accounts describing artistic production, scholars must turn to a variety of sources to reconstruct the environments in which works of art, in various media, were produced in the ancient Near East. The symposium aimed to coordinate and evaluate the current status of our knowledge and to initiate directions for further study, with new sources, strategies, or methodologies, or with enhanced multidisciplinary emphasis.

The papers succeeded not only in assembling conveniently a considerable range of information hitherto scattered or inaccessible, but also in contributing fresh critical approaches to the topic of artistic environments in the ancient Near East. Since the subject is of interest to audiences in the fields of both Near Eastern studies and comparative histories of art, we sought to circulate the information and ideas generated by the symposium and to fill a significant gap among existing publications.

Nine of the papers in this volume were originally delivered at the 1988 symposium. I have added an introductory essay, "Artists and Ancient Near Eastern Art," intended to summarize some of the research that prompted this symposium and to touch on topics not discussed by the other participants. Dieter Metzler has contributed a written commentary based on his remarks at the conclusion of the symposium and on revised versions of the papers. Two of the symposium papers have not been included in this volume. Pieter Meyers, head of conservation at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, spoke on "Silver as Artist's Material in the Sasanian Era." His research has been published in part in *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period*, Vol. I, *Royal Imagery* (Princeton and New York 1981) and will also be included in forthcoming publications. Prudence O. Harper, head of the Ancient Near East Department, Metropolitan Museum of Art, presented "Luxury Vessels as Symbolic Images in Parthian, Sasanian, and Central Asian Art." A revised version will be published in the proceedings of "Histoire et cultures de l'Asie Centrale pré-Islamique," a 1988 congress organized by the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris.

This volume owes its prompt appearance to all of the contributors as well as to the talented and highly motivated staff of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. Milo C. Beach, director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art, articulates

the privileged place of such symposia among the multiple intellectual functions of the museums in his foreword. I am pleased to have the opportunity to thank him publicly for committing the gallery's resources to this endeavor. Mary Kay Zuravleff has contributed her outstanding skills as editor and organizer, and she deserves full credit for bringing the publication to fruition. Every paper has benefited from her thoughtful editing; it has been an unqualified pleasure to work with her. Karen Sagstetter, head of the publications department, arranged for distribution of the volume. I am also grateful to Polly Sexton, who designed the book. Gail Price kept careful track of manuscripts and illustrations, managing the difficult tasks of typing and revising with characteristic efficiency and goodwill.

I am deeply indebted to Mrs. Arthur M. Sackler, whose participation and generosity made possible both the symposium and the publication. Arthur M. Sackler was keenly interested in the art of the ancient Near East; to contemplate the sources of its genius seemed an appropriate tribute to his enduring spirit.

Ann C. Gunter

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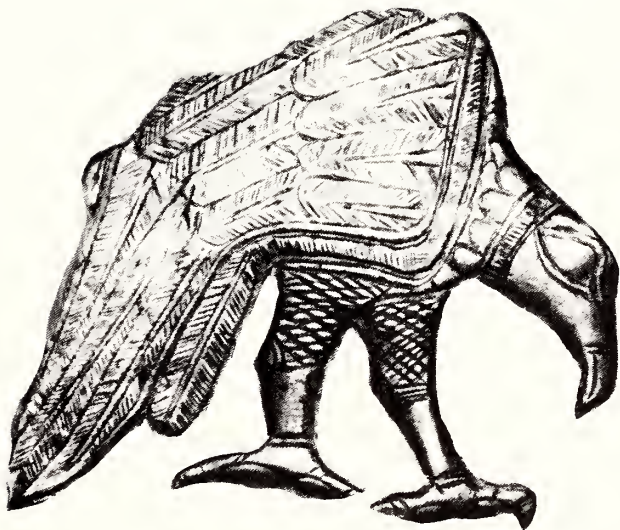
Michael Roaf, a specialist in Near Eastern archaeology, is a research fellow of the Leverhulme Trust. He has directed archaeological expeditions in Iraq, Iran, and Bahrain, and his fieldwork reports have been published in *Iran*, *Iraq*, *Sumer*, and *Paléorient*. Among his monographs are *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis (Iran 21, 1983)* and *Excavations at Qal'at Ana, 1981–82*, with A. Northedge and A. Bamber (in press).

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INVESTIGATING ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENTS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

PART I
INTRODUCTION



Introduction

Robert McC. Adams

IN RECOGNITION OF THE INTERNATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT ANCIENT Near Eastern art collection at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, scholars representing a variety of disciplines gathered there in spring 1988. This volume of their papers shares with us their learning, ideas, and intuitions on a complex set of questions concerning the social, political, economic, and aesthetic circumstance of artistic production in the ancient Near East. Unlike other periods of Near Eastern history, or of most other cultural spheres of comparable richness and complexity, relatively few written documents are known from that region that deal explicitly with processes of artistic production. Instead, investigations of artistic environments in the ancient Near East require a multidisciplinary approach that combines the evidence and methodologies of historians, art historians, archaeologists, and others.

Introducing an exploration of the social contexts of ancient Near Eastern art, I am driven to pose what seems to me the underlying question relating to the purpose, function, and institutional setting of all ancient art: To what extent was art distinct from craft, artist from artisan? To answer this, we must both narrow our focus from the societal to the individual level and broaden our inquiry to include investigations of self-conception and motivation.

Reflecting on the historical development of design allows us to consider new strategies for studying the individual creator, and his or her self-conception and motivation. The word “design” has a baffling array of only loosely connected uses. Running through them, however, is almost always a motivational component. Also implied is a conscious, intentional, and to a considerable degree autonomous, human actor. The designing species is *Homo faber*.

I believe it would be generally conceded that the work of archaeologists and art historians concerned with pre-classical periods for the most part has rested on quite different premises or assumptions. Not primarily related to the importance of self-directed elements of design at all, these premises instead reflect the limitations of our available material. While our data permit us to detect and explain some patterning of behavior in fragmentary textual or archaeological residues of human artistic activity, they can, after all, tell us essentially nothing directly of the activity’s intended goals. Save on rare, exploratory occasions such as the symposium that prompted this volume, therefore, the introduction of a consciously motivated, designing *Homo faber* may well seem too speculative to be helpful.

Those of us still left with a residue of curiosity or desire to generalize can continue to grope toward questions of motivation mainly by relying on the rather shaky assumption of a human propensity for reaching decisions whose rational basis can still be apprehended—the calculating pragmatism of a *Homo oeconomicus*. Or alternatively, deprecating the role of individual will and variability, we may emphasize that a great part of human action surely is constrained, if not regulated, by social and cultural norms and confine our attention to this element of causation. That leads to an emphasis on attempts to decipher the template of traditional meanings from the array of styles and symbolic forms that have survived. For those more inclined toward the social sciences, playing down the role of the individual implies the submissiveness of most individuals, most of the time, to a group identity suggestive of a *Homo sociologicus*.

Each such characterization—*faber*, *oeconomicus*, and *sociologicus*—highlights some aspects of human aspirations, cognition, or behavior and downplays or ignores others. It should not disturb us that all three labels, or others that you may favor, partially contradict one another. Economics, as has sometimes been observed, is all about why people make choices, while sociology is all about why they don't have any choices to make. Single, self-consistent explanations may have the virtue of simplicity, but in the end they generally mislead rather than facilitate genuine understanding.

The idea of design, associated with intentional human action, is most serviceable and necessary for the later parts of our historical record. But in a less strict and yet still valid sense, activity we would all place under the rubric of design must be traced far back in prehistory. In fact, it can hardly be later than the appearance of the species *Homo sapiens*. How else could we interpret the variability of motif, within coherent, slowly changing stylistic norms, of early painted pottery? And if we proceed in this way, must we not be prepared on occasion to drop the aesthetic element out of the concept of design altogether? To do so involves only the small further—and I think inevitable—step of applying the idea of design to *any* sequence of connected, purposeful decisions.

Conscious design is the essential element in specifically *human* rationality, which is “characterized by the capacity to relate to the future, in contradistinction to the myopic gradient-climbing in natural selection”¹ of all other living organisms. The capacity for a future orientation may make it useful to speak of an impersonal, inner logic to the evolution of styles. By placing particular works in longer sequences of developments, we gradually become sensitized to what was inherited, what was new at each step, and how the past has been continuously reinterpreted. Yet, as E. H. Gombrich warns,

We must only guard against the temptation of hindsight to regard this outcome as inevitable. For every one of the masters concerned, the future was open, and although each may have been restricted in his choice by certain characteristics of the situation, the directions the development might have taken are still beyond computation.²

In art and in craft, as probably in all other activities, salient, individualizing characteristics were slow to detach themselves from their surroundings. In fact, it is only through stylistic variability—in effect, through design—that the individual,

at least in prehistory, is discoverable. Not surprisingly, human figures are later and cruder than those of other forms of life in essentially all cultural traditions. And when they first do occur toward the end of the Pleistocene, they take vaguely generalized and distorted forms such as “mother goddesses” that lack any elements of human portraiture.

That generalization can stand unchanged even after the introduction of agriculture and the beginnings of town life. Individualized portraiture first seems to have been associated with deities or with ambiguous or mediating figures like shamans directly in touch with the supernatural, whether or not represented in human form. Only subsequently does the field broaden to include representations of “real” people, presumably at first ruling elites for the most part. Am I correct in my impression that the creative powers of individual artists and craftsmen failed to achieve notice in our surviving textual records from the ancient Near East? At least, in the cuneiform tradition, craft production processes remained entangled in depersonalized, ritual formulas in spite of their technical versatility.

A tantalizing but only partial exception, prior to the handful of noted artists and/or artisans of classical Greece, is the Egyptian vizier Imhotep. Coinciding with the earliest and most creative flowering of Egyptian civilization during the Old Kingdom and long afterward the prototype for the Greek figure of Aesculapius, he stands out strikingly among senior officials. Unique among the autobiographical tomb inscriptions, his concludes a long list of successively greater administrative responsibilities with the simple phrase, “carpenter and sculptor.”

Design, invention, scientific discovery, and artistic achievement have something in common. They are usually outcomes of directed, creative processes. Alfred Kroeber long ago noted that these processes tend to occur in bursts. Praxiteles, Euphronius, Archimedes, Thales are representative figures in the first such eruption to survive in Greece, at least in a form we can still recognize. Were we able to detect similar clusters in the earlier Near Eastern textual corpus, that observation alone might provide us with powerful insights into the relative autonomy and consciousness of individualized creativity that characterized what otherwise seems to have been an undifferentiated amalgam of art and craft.

Along with the emergence of individually known creative figures—Thales, we know, was not only a philosopher and mathematician but also foretold an eclipse (with the aid of a Babylonian astronomical table) and made a killing cornering the olive oil market—it is perhaps no accident that the classical Greeks were the first to sign or otherwise take or be given credit for their own works. The preoccupation with one’s place in and contribution to the stream of recorded time and achievement—“a sense of history”—was also apparently Greek in its first inspiration.

The next great cluster coincided with the general uncoiling of energies at the outset of the Renaissance. Once again the technical, the scientific, and the artistic joined, or at least overlapped, in ways that for modern tastes are disconcerting: Leonardo, Michelangelo, Copernicus, Galileo, Gutenberg. Yet there was a forward thrust to this, prefigured by the cult of the saints, differentiating it from the pattern of classical antiquity. David Landes and others have written of the obsession of many major Renaissance figures with machinery, especially with clockwork.³ Essentially, human artifices appeared during the Renaissance as a gestalt for the universe itself.

And most of the new creators stood in a relationship of dependence upon a princely or clerical patron who had no earlier classical counterpart.

I submit that, in a symposium that has come together to consider artistic environments, we would do well to give full attention to this matter of patronage and institutional support systems. Joseph Alsop, in his thought-provoking work on the rare art traditions, persuasively makes the case for the by-products of art forming a closely linked system with patronage as its centerpiece. Art collecting, the development of a market for art, and the disciplined pursuit of art history are the system's primary components. Around them grow up art museums, a selective attraction for earlier objects and styles in the form of antiques, and a cyclical, quite striking revaluation of works and styles that he describes as "a kind of stock market of taste."⁴ Alsop, perhaps prudently, places the creation of works of art outside of and antecedent to this interacting system. But art itself may be affected by immense waves of alteration in its collective perceptions, styles, and subject matters. Granting that no originaive act such as the creation of art can be subsumed within a system, it is surely unreasonable to regard the creative process as wholly responsive to some enigmatic combination of its own inner drives and impervious to any other influences. All of Alsop's by-products, it seems to me, have strong reciprocal influences upon the artist.

M. H. Abrams has reinforced my conviction on this issue. He argues cogently for a surprisingly recent process of bifurcation that separates art from craft:

Theorists of the various arts, from classical Greece through most of the eighteenth century, had assumed the maker's stance toward a work of art, and had analyzed its attributes in terms of a construction model. That is, they posited a poem or any other work of art to be an *opus*, a thing that is made according to a *techne* or *ars*, that is, a craft, each with its requisite skills for selecting materials and shaping them into a work designed to effect certain external ends, such as achieving pleasure or instruction or emotional effects on an audience, as well as for adapting the work to a particular social occasion or function.⁵

With Immanuel Kant standing at the watershed of what Abrams sees as a "Copernican revolution in the theory of art," the "fine arts" emerged during the eighteenth century as a separate and coherent subset, detached from the setting of their intended functions, from the techniques involved in their construction, and indeed, as Kant put it, "intrinsically final, devoid of an [extrinsic] end." This was a

contemplation model, which treated the products of all the fine arts as ready-made things existing simply as objects of rapt attention. And the essential feature predicated of the fine arts, setting them off from all cognitive, practical, and moral pursuits, was that each work is to be experienced disinterestedly, for its own sake, unalloyed by reference to the world, or to human life or concerns, or to any relations, ends, or values outside its all-sufficing self.⁶

Art-as-such, Abrams concludes, "is not an inherent fact but an institutional fact." It is "a way of talking about art that emerged at a particular time, as an integral and reciprocative element in an altering form of social life marked by the development of many new institutions to make highly diverse human products widely public, and for no other ostensible purpose than simply to be attended to for their own sake." Echoing Alsop, he relates these changes to a broadened access to upper class

status and its symbols, and to the corresponding growth of a nonutilitarian aesthetic culture and the prestige of connoisseurship.⁷

Let me return briefly to the remark of Gombrich's that I quoted earlier, essentially a warning against predicating inevitability in the sequential reconstruction of ancient art styles and bodies of iconography. Not only for prehistory but also for several millennia of ancient history—in fact, until a few of those Greeks began to sign their works—it is important to remember that our temporal placements of individual works tend heavily toward uncertainty and subjectivity. The fact that a chronological fabric exists in textual sources is only indirectly helpful. The duration of use of objects after their manufacture is usually almost impossible to determine, and in any case the contemporaneity of objects and the archaeological deposits in which they are found are seldom absolute. Radiocarbon-dictated blocks of time covering four to eight generations, or even longer, remain our elemental building units under most circumstances. Thus, chronological controls are usually a coarse-meshed sieve.

One likely consequence of the artificially lengthened temporal latticework through which we view ancient works of craft or art is an excessive emphasis on gradualistic rather than punctuated change. In effect, we compose a temporal and developmental ordering out of hypothetical sequences of snapshots. The underlying assumptions and hypotheses can never be made fully explicit in what is essentially a creative process, but there is every reason to suspect a pronounced bias toward smoothed, over-determined outcomes.

Does the same general principle apply to the corpus of material findings out of which we reconstruct art styles? In other words, are we relying too heavily on the premise of maximal cohesiveness at any given moment and an intelligible directionality of change from beginning to end? As we begin to question that premise, we will quickly recognize the need to view artistic environments—both those immediately surrounding groups of artists or craftsmen working together and the larger social environments enveloping many such groupings—from a challenging series of new viewpoints. Unexpected turnings or openings are what the Sackler symposium was all about.

There is, in short, a new and stimulating intellectual enterprise that emerges from this set of papers. On behalf of the Smithsonian Institution, it is a pleasure to thank those who have initiated it, and to welcome those who will study it.

Notes

1. Jon Elster, *Ulysses and the Sirens: Studies in Rationality and Irrationality* (Cambridge 1979) vii.
2. E. H. Gombrich, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 15, s.v. "style" (New York 1968) 357.
3. David S. Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983).
4. Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: A History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena* (New York 1982) 16.
5. M. H. Abrams, "Art-as-such: The Sociology of Modern Aesthetics," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 38 (1985) 10.
6. Abrams (*supra* n. 5) 14.
7. Abrams (*supra* n. 5) 10, 13–14, 26, 31–32.

Artists and Ancient Near Eastern Art

Ann C. Gunter

MUST THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART BE WRITTEN AND understood without reference to artists? Many scholars attribute to those cultures a pervasive, sustained lack of interest in the value or achievements of an individual artist. Indeed, most textbooks for ancient Near Eastern studies present this view. The historian H. W. F. Saggs summarized these sentiments in his handbook on the ancient Near East.

Throughout the whole two and a half millennia with which we are concerned all works of art were anonymous. . . . Another general consideration is that much ancient art was the work of what we should regard as craftsmen rather than artists.¹

Traditional histories of art credit the ancient Greeks with initiating an environment hospitable to artistic creativity and individuality. They signed their works of art and elevated the status of craftsman to that of artist.² Only recently have art historians begun to question this assumption. By contrast, the ancient Near East is usually considered a limited source for understanding either the complex intellectual and emotional process we call artistic creativity or its social and institutional foundations. Artistic innovation and the celebration of individuality, considered as cultural values, have allegedly been priorities of a Western mind.

The limited nature of written sources for ancient Near Eastern art, as well as the relatively recent history of the field, have necessarily relegated the investigation of artists or artisans to a minor place. For the generation of scholars trained in the excavations of the 1920s and 1930s, the study of ancient Near Eastern art was grounded in the information contained in the Mesopotamian cuneiform archives, which had yielded a vast corpus of literary, economic, and political texts. Those documents had not revealed a widespread or sustained interest in the individual artist or artisan, and histories of ancient Near Eastern art did not dwell on the subject.

Neither "artisan" nor "craftsman" appear in the index to Henri Frankfort's *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*.³ Threaded through Frankfort's pioneering synthesis, to be sure, are keen observations on the relationships between various media in a given period of ancient Near Eastern history, signaling insights into the organization and mechanics of artistic production. But Frankfort's primary concern was the identification and description of similar and recurring features of form, iconography, and style in ancient Near Eastern architecture, sculpture, glyptic, and painting. Elements of design and decoration, such as the tripartite plan or recessed

walls characteristic of Sumerian religious architecture, were viewed by Frankfort as collective responses to materials and cosmological beliefs, made formal and standardized. For example, he identified the source of Sumerian artistic flowering as the “spiritual climate” of southern Mesopotamia in that period.⁴ Implicit in his writings is a notion of art as *Volksgeist*, an expression of an ethnically or linguistically defined group.⁵

Many students of the ancient Near East have seen the potential for analyzing relationships between works of art, in subject, style, and design, as sources for reconstructing the ways in which artists or artisans worked in the ancient Near East. To date, however, this interest has occupied relatively little space in general accounts of ancient Near Eastern art, and oversimplified presentations of the subject continue to appear in universal histories of art.

Students of the pre-Islamic Near East are, unquestionably, at a significant disadvantage with regard to the quantity and kinds of information now available for studying the organization and production of works of art, even by comparison with other cultures of remote antiquity.⁶ Moreover, such ancient Near Eastern records as are preserved are written in a variety of languages, still only imperfectly understood. The field needs basic philological groundwork to evaluate information on artistic production and aesthetic sensibilities preserved in extant texts. Investigation and isolation of relevant terms and of the contexts in which they occur have yet to be undertaken systematically. At Columbia University, Sally Dunham is currently compiling and annotating a glossary of Akkadian terms for works of art and architecture, which will contribute a fundamental new resource for all future studies of ancient Near Eastern art.⁷

Historians of ancient Near Eastern art have perhaps been disappointed to find that written sources revealed little attention to artistic personalities and their influence in the creation of works of art and architecture. And, presented with artistic traditions that seemed to be characterized by continuity of style and forms of expression rather than by change, scholars have had little need to postulate a significant role for the individual artisan.

Yet recent study of written sources from better-documented cultures has revealed that roles explicitly ascribed to individuals may reflect biographical conventions or literary traditions introduced at a later date, and thus cannot always be used confidently to reconstruct aesthetic sensibilities or the processes of artistic creation. In the field of ancient Greek art, for example, new critical approaches have challenged the notion that originality and artistic personality were highly venerated throughout classical antiquity. Following in part the approach pioneered by Rhys Carpenter, Brunilde S. Ridgway has cautioned against the implicit and long-held assumption that Roman histories of ancient Greek sculpture, dominated by great individual personalities, accurately reflect the circumstances of sculptural production in the fifth century B.C. Contemporary building accounts from that era, for example, do not support the view that individual artists were so prominent as Roman sources assert.⁸ In Ridgway’s words,

[This is not to] imply that all masters were ignorant carvers, but simply that they did not play that *primadonna* role implicit in the extant Roman accounts. Single aesthetic contributions were still possible within this traditional framework.⁹

Even for cultures and periods blessed with abundant sources explicitly concerned with the role of the individual artist or patron, careful evaluation is required. Milo C. Beach has convincingly argued this point with regard to biographical traditions granting Mughal emperors and their court artists a paramount role in the creation of individual styles of painting or innovations in those practices. He has demonstrated that Western scholars have constructed this interpretation in part because of their own assumptions about the role of the individual in promoting artistic creativity or effecting stylistic change.¹⁰

The assumption that names of individuals are a prerequisite for discussing art or creativity reflects to a significant degree the influence of earlier notions of the artist and originality on students of many cultural traditions. Historians of ancient Near Eastern art could also learn from specialists who have focused on notions of originality apart from, or even in conflict with, individuality. For example, the Sackler Gallery's Chinese painting scholars Shen Fu and Jan Stuart are currently working on a comprehensive study of Chang Dai-chien, a remarkably prolific twentieth-century Chinese painter. Chang Dai-chien trained himself by copying, and sometimes forging, ancient Chinese masterpieces. And yet he, more than any other modern Chinese artist, pioneered a style of painting that used traditional materials and techniques but was akin to Abstract Expressionism. He is widely recognized as one of the major innovators in twentieth-century Chinese painting.¹¹

Clearly, ancient Near Eastern specialists cannot disregard the kinds of evidence that have come to light concerning ancient Near Eastern artisans and their products, and proceed as if those societies shared modern Western notions of art and the artist.¹² A history of ancient Near Eastern art as a history of artists cannot be written. Instead, scholars must design research initiatives and methods rooted in the available evidence, seeking to describe ways in which ancient Near Eastern societies solved aesthetic problems as they presented themselves to the sensibilities and cultures of their peoples.¹³

A comparative lack of explicit textual testimony on the role of the individual—artist or patron—should not necessarily prove fatal to efforts to reconstruct at least in broad terms the circumstances under which persons equipped with particular skills, resources, and sensibilities created objects that were valued for a variety of cultural reasons. Ancient Near Eastern records concerned with artisans and their activities certainly suggest that works of art and those who fashioned them were highly prized, even if that recognition is not enshrined in the biographical mode familiar to Western art historiography. No single, unchanging definition of an artisan emerges from ancient Near Eastern texts. We need to draw upon a variety of sources, written and archaeological, in order to reconstruct specific intellectual, aesthetic, and social climates in which works of art were produced.¹⁴ As usual, analogies drawn from other cultural spheres may also contribute theoretical assistance in devising new approaches or methods of analysis to understanding the complex issues embraced by creativity and artistic production as well as the problems of both written and material evidence peculiar to the ancient Near East.

By “artisan” or “craftsman” is meant, in ancient Near Eastern sources, any practitioner of a specialized skill. Modern Western usage insists on drawing a sharp distinction between artisan and artist, for reasons important to the present inquiry.

The image-maker as artisan practices a craft learned in the workshop, whose achievement consists primarily in the proper handling of materials. The artist, by contrast, does not believe that techniques taught within the workshop context constitute the most important area of his expertise; understanding of things beyond craft, as well as divine guidance, inspiration, or genius, are essential to his definition of artistic creation.¹⁵

In a variety of cultures of the ancient Near East, documents consider collectively such specialists as musicians, carpenters, scribes, and sculptors. Philologists and historians have retrieved from a variety of written sources significant information on the ancient Near Eastern artisan, his social role, and the conditions of his employment. In most cases, artisans were organized in palace or temple workshops, where they held lifetime positions. In such “redistributive” economies, specialized personnel were given temporary or long-term assignments, within the capital or in peripheral locations administered by the palace or temple. Most abundant among the documents concerning craftsmen employed by such institutions are the Middle Bronze Age archives from the palace at Mari. At Mari, the category artisan (*mār ummênim*) included physicians, scribes, barbers, cooks, and masons, all of whom were part of the palace bureaucracy. References among the Mari archives to runaway craftsmen who were caught and brought back to the palace, and to security arrangements to prevent their escape, suggest that not all artisans were satisfied with the conditions of their employment.¹⁶ Artisans also operated within what Carlo Zaccagnini has called a “reciprocative” economy, in which they were sent on assignment from one court to another, usually at a foreign ruler’s express request. Thus, specialized craftsmen—including physicians, diviners, and sculptors—were sent to and from Egypt, Babylon, and Hattusha during the Late Bronze Age. Clearly these artisans and their skills were highly prized by their own governments as well as their foreign hosts. Letters reveal that some of them were detained for considerable periods of time at their “temporary” place of assignment, and that repeated requests from the highest levels were often necessary to effect their release.¹⁷

Changes in the organization and social status of craftsmen, both for better and for worse, can be observed among the various empires of the first millennium B.C. It seems clear that there was a higher number of slaves among those engaged in specialized crafts during this period. At the same time, there are examples of groups of artisans in Neo-Babylonian Eanna who bargained with their employers over aspects of their professional responsibilities and working conditions.¹⁸ Zaccagnini has also suggested that during the first millennium B.C. there was an increase in the number of independent artisans, that is, those who operated outside both the palace/temple redistributive economy and the reciprocal economy.

In a few words, it might be observed that there was an increasing number of “serfs” who were employed as unskilled labor but who were also active in more specialized tasks; on the other hand, even in the absence of a true labor-market, the degree of individual independence *de facto* enjoyed by single “artisans” or groups of “artisans” had considerably increased.¹⁹

Some of the foreign artisans mentioned in Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid records may have been forcibly recruited by the imperial administration. But, at least in some instances, it seems more likely that the artisans operated individually as

specialists in search of better positions abroad. Their movements from one country to another reflect not a chosen itinerant way of life, but a temporary state of unemployment; they sought permanent jobs within an established palace economy.²⁰

Less fully investigated than the status of artisans are the practical details of artistic and architectural production in the ancient Near East. Art historians have much to contribute to this subject by probing further the available written sources as well as the monuments themselves. Important work remains to be done in documenting the training of artisans in the ancient Near East and their methods of workmanship, information critical to reconstructing notions of craftsmanship and creativity as well as of the nature of a work of art. In this connection, contracts for apprentices might be examined to help determine contemporary notions of proper training, the length and conditions of apprenticeship, and by what criteria artisans and their products were evaluated.²¹

Evidence for the mechanics of artistic or architectural design and the recording or exchange of such information could also be further explored.²² The development of a standardized vocabulary of shapes, designs, or decoration, permitting wide circulation of this information within and between workshops, and among artisans working in a variety of media, clearly represented a critical step.²³ Most histories of ancient Near Eastern art postulate the existence of sketchbooks as sources for circulating and standardizing patterns of figures or ornament. Several clay models preserving figural “sketches” supply some likely candidates; a systematic search through excavation reports and museum storerooms may yield sufficient additional examples to undertake a fruitful study.²⁴ Recent investigation of the canon of proportions used in representing the human figure in ancient Near Eastern art has opened promising new avenues for reconstructing some of the precise mechanisms of artistic production and influence.²⁵

The world of artistic thought and training is also revealed through approaches to the representation of realia, foreigners, and other aspects of art as documentation. In the absence of detailed written explanations such approaches are elusive and difficult to establish, but they may prove valuable in establishing patterns of workmanship. Forms of pictorial narration would supply another source of information on inherited traditions of design, expression, and style.

For some scholars, evidence that sculptors worked from standardized designs provides clear proof that ancient Near Eastern artisans exercised little, if any, individual creativity at the moment of carving, and that—as previously suspected—those cultures placed no value on innovation or on the contribution of a particular craftsman. Analysis of the monuments themselves may help to provide partial answers for at least some cultures of the ancient Near East. In her penetrating reexamination of the sculptures at Persepolis, Margaret Cool Root has shown that they form a program of decoration consisting of a carefully assembled imperial iconography and systematized formal expression, whose creation must have involved the active participation of the Persian king. Stonecarvers, of a variety of ethnic identities, worked from models of that program supplied to them by a master designer.²⁶ Yet, as Root has argued elsewhere,

in the area of *style* there *may be* significant points at which ingrained patterns of early

training in specific media and representational modes and ingrained region-specific aesthetic sensibilities of individual carvers do in fact show through the overlays of master planning.²⁷

Works of ancient Near Eastern art have not been adequately examined from this perspective. Hand-attribution remains an important methodological tool that could, given a large corpus of images, assist in establishing patterns of workmanship or identifying individual styles.²⁸

Closely linked with evidence for the role of the artisan is that of the patron. With the exception of royal inscriptions, few documents explicitly concerned with the subject of patronage have come to light in the pre-Hellenistic Near East.²⁹ For that reason, the royal realm constitutes one of the few social arenas available for the study of artistic patronage in the ancient Near East. Yet our understanding of the precise mechanisms of artistic patronage in the ancient Near East, even in cases where royal participation can be demonstrated, remains dim.³⁰ Much of the monumental art in the ancient Near East is certainly to be understood as *Machtkunst*, and must have involved the ruler's initiative, direction, or active involvement. But other innovations in court art may well have resulted from individual artistic initiative, most feasibly investigated today through abundant preserved evidence of seals of known ownership or their impressions. A model of a dynamic relationship between artisan or workshop and patron, for example, might profitably be applied to studies of seals cut for high-ranking Persians in the Achaemenid court. This would serve as an explanatory hypothesis for the variety of artistic styles among seals cut for court patrons within a relatively short period of time.³¹

Attempts to reconstruct in broad terms the aesthetic sensibilities that existed in the ancient Near East may also provide information pertinent to this investigation.³² Such an investigation might begin with available relevant texts, isolating and comparing the kinds of objects circulated through the tribute mode with those circulated through more strictly commercial forms of exchange.³³ Further investigation of extant monuments themselves could produce additional information for aesthetic attitudes implied, if not explicated. Studies of the program of sculptural decoration at Persepolis and in Neo-Assyrian palaces, for example, have yielded significant clues to understanding intended visual messages, imperial ideologies, and contemporary concepts of audience.³⁴ Collecting and collections, broadly defined, could also be explored for insights into attitudes toward objects and their attributes.³⁵ Another dimension of ancient Near Eastern art concerns the aesthetic and artistic environment that, on occasion, engendered archaisms. What lay behind the conscious revival of earlier styles, subjects, or forms of expression, and what artistic processes or organizational forms were required for their re-creation?³⁶ Investigations into the phenomenon of skeuomorphism, the manufacture of objects in one material intended to evoke the appearance of another, should also yield new insights into aesthetic sensibilities, training in specific media, and other workshop practices.³⁷ Art historians could attempt to redefine existing categories of ancient Near Eastern artistic forms and styles, devising more culturally appropriate models instead of relying on categories developed for the study of Western art. An example is the category of "portraiture." Perhaps a more productive approach would be to study all ancient evidence for representing the ruler, as broadly defined as possible,

rather than isolating extant candidates for “portraits” and attempting to draw conclusions from an inevitably limited and problematic corpus.³⁸

Finally, traditional approaches to ancient Near Eastern art and the role of the artisan also reflect a longstanding Western preoccupation with the process of creation as the most significant aspect of artistic production. That other moments in the life of a work of art can illuminate its history, aesthetic reference, and social context has emerged from a provocative study by Carl Nylander on the intentional destruction of works of art in the ancient Near East.³⁹ The results of his investigation will have significant implications for reconstructing more broadly the role of works of art, their literal and symbolic meanings, and the aesthetic sensibilities of the societies—and individuals—that created them.

There are, in sum, a wealth of untapped sources available for investigating artistic environments in the ancient Near East. These sources provide a richer, more dynamic picture of artistic production than has traditionally been considered feasible. A greater understanding of ancient Near Eastern works of art will emerge from a search for their makers.

Notes

1. H. W. F. Saggs, *The Greatness That Was Babylon* (New York 1962) 446–47.
2. A typical example is found in H. Gardner, *Art Through the Ages*, 8th ed., rev. by H. de la Croix and R. G. Tansey (New York 1987) 126–28.
3. H. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Harmondsworth 1954; rev. ed., London 1970). The volume, revised by Helene Kantor, remains the classic text for ancient Near Eastern art.
4. Frankfort (supra n. 3) 11–12, 24–25.
5. Frankfort (supra n. 3) 50–52, on ideal geometric forms inherent in a national mentality.
6. A remarkable series of contributions on the subject is now available for medieval Europe: Xavier Barral i Altet, ed., *Artistes, artisans, et production artistique en Bretagne au Moyen Age* (Rennes 1983); also idem, ed., *Artistes, artisans, et production artistique au Moyen Age, Rapports provisoires*, 2 vols. (Rennes 1983). My thanks to Stephen A. Zwirn for bringing these references to my attention. Medieval European aesthetic sensibilities are also discussed in a provocative study by Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. H. Bredin (New Haven and London 1986).
7. Though various publications have addressed important aspects of the subject, none has attempted a comprehensive investigation. A fundamental contribution is made in McGuire Gibson and Robert D. Biggs, eds., *Seals and Sealing in the Ancient Near East*, *Bibliotheca Mesopotamica* 6 (Malibu 1977). Sally Dunham has drawn my attention to the recent study by Hans Neumann, *Handwerk in Mesopotamien: Untersuchungen zu seiner Organisation in der Zeit der III. Dynastie von Ur* (Berlin 1987).

Recent studies of relevant Hittite terms or texts include the following sources and their bibliographies: Sedat Alp, *Beiträge zur Erforschung des hethitischen Tempels: Kultanlagen im Lichte der Keilschrifttexte*, *Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından* VI, 23 (Ankara 1983); Hans G. Güterbock, “Hethitische Götterbilder und Kultobjekte,” in Rainer M. Boehmer and Harald Hauptmann, eds., *Beiträge zur Altertumskunde Kleinasiens: Festschrift für Kurt Bittel* (Mainz 1983) 203–17.

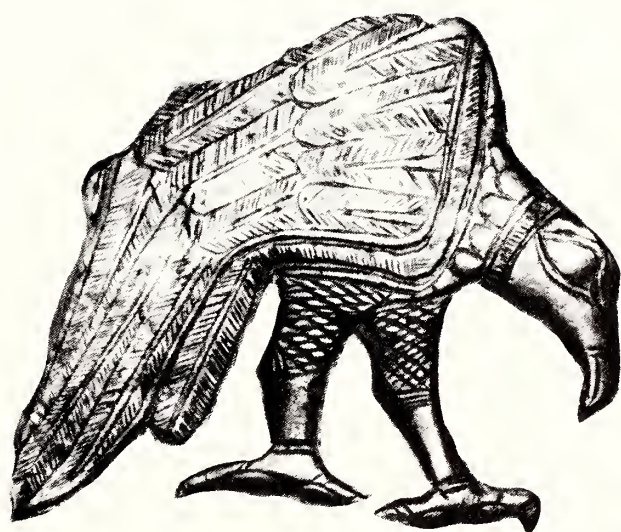
8. Brunilde S. Ridgway, *Fifth Century Styles in Greek Sculpture* (Princeton 1981) 5–10 and relevant bibliographic entries. Important discussions of the production of art in Greek and Roman antiquity are also found in R. L. Gordon, “The Real and the Imaginary: Production and Religion in the Graeco-Roman World,” *Art History* 2 (1979) 5–34; and Jesper Svenbro, *La parole et le marbre: aux origines de la poésie grecque* (Lund 1976), extensively discussed in *DialArch* n.s. 3, pt. 2 (1981) 1–108.

9. Ridgway (supra n. 8) 6 n. 9. She comments later, "I do not mean to argue against *all* artistic individuality; my position is mostly a question of degrees, of the forms of expression of such artistic assertiveness and of the relative importance of expressive media in ancient times" (ibid. 7 n. 8). This conveys precisely my own view of the situation for the ancient Near East.
10. Milo C. Beach, "The Mughal Artist," in Michael W. Meister, ed., *Making Things in South Asia: The Role of Artist and Craftsman* (Philadelphia 1988) 78–85.
11. Göran Hermerén, *Influence in Art and Literature* (Princeton 1975) esp. 141–44, discusses Western preoccupation with artistic originality. Comparative approaches are also found in Susan Bush and Christian Murck, eds., *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton 1983).
12. A detailed statement on the subject, treating primarily the field of Greek art, has helped to shape my discussion and can be found in Philippe Bruneau, "Situation méthodologique de l'histoire de l'art antique," *AntCl* 44 (1975) 425–87. Jan Stuart kindly steered me toward a lucid discussion of similar problems in approaches to ancient Chinese art by Wen Fong, "The Study of Chinese Bronze Age Arts: Methods and Approaches," in Wen Fong, ed., *The Great Bronze Age of China* (New York 1980) 20–34.
13. I have closely paraphrased the approach advocated by Umberto Eco, to whom my discussion is deeply indebted; Eco (supra n. 6) 2.
14. The article by Marie-Henriette Gates in this volume is a pioneering model of this approach.
15. Such distinctions between artist and artisan were introduced in medieval Europe. Xénia Muratova provides a thoughtful synthesis in her article, "*Vir quidem fallax et falsidicus, sed artifex praelectus*. Remarques sur l'image sociale et littéraire de l'artiste au Moyen Age," in Xavier Barral i Altet, ed., *Artistes, artisans, et production artistique au Moyen Age*, Colloque international, Vol. I, *Les hommes* (Rennes 1983) 53–72.
Significantly, the art of the ancient Near East was largely rediscovered during the nineteenth century, when developed mythologies of the artist had become central to the study of art; Muratova, 53–55, cites pertinent bibliography on the image of the artist from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century.
16. Jack M. Sasson, "Instances of Mobility among Mari Artisans," *BASOR* 190 (1968) 46–54; also discussed in Sasson's contribution to this volume. Carlo Zaccagnini, "Patterns of Mobility Among Ancient Near Eastern Craftsmen," *JNES* 42 (1983) 247–49.
17. Zaccagnini (supra n. 16) 249–56; also Gary Beckman, "Mesopotamians and Mesopotamian Learning at Hattuša," *JCS* 35 (1983) 97–114.
18. Zaccagnini (supra n. 16) 261.
19. Zaccagnini (supra n. 16) 264. Zaccagnini also cites references to the extensive literature on the workers (*kurtaš*) mentioned in the Persepolis Fortification tablets. A recent contribution concerned with the Greek sources on Persian workers is Alan Griffiths, "Democedes of Croton: A Greek Doctor at the Court of Darius," in Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Amélie Kuhrt, eds., *Achaemenid History*, Vol. II, *The Greek Sources*, Proceedings of the Groningen 1984 Achaemenid History Workshop (Leiden 1987) 37–51.
20. Zaccagnini (supra n. 16) 256–64.
21. Mariano San Nicolo, *Der neubabylonische Lehrvertrag in rechtsvergleichender Betrachtung* (Munich 1950). My thanks to Dieter Metzler for directing me to this reference.
22. Architects' drawings on fragmentary clay tablets from Susa: George G. Cameron, *History of Early Iran* (Chicago 1936) 123; for a textual description, F. R. Kraus, "Ein altakkadisches Festungsbild," *Iraq* 11 (1948) 81–92.
23. In this volume, Anne D. Kilmer's article addresses the Akkadian vocabulary for standardized designs.
24. Clay sherds with "sketches," Neo-Babylonian (?), from Nippur, now in the University Museum, Philadelphia: Leon Legrain, *Culture of the Babylonians* (Philadelphia 1925) nos. 1061–68, 362–63, pls. XLIX–L; also Neo-Assyrian clay models from Ashur, in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin: Anton Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, trans. J. Filson (London 1969) pls. 280–81; and an example from Nineveh, now in London: Richard D. Barnett, *Sculptures from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal* (London 1976) BM 93011, 35 and pl. 1. A stone ear from Persepolis, identified as a sculptor's model, is in the Oriental Institute: Mar-

- garet Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*, Acta Iranica 19 (Leiden 1979) 14 n. 29.
25. Guitty Azarpay, "Proportional Guidelines in Ancient Near Eastern Art," *JNES* 46 (1987) 183–213; and in her article in this volume.
 26. Root (supra n. 24); Carl Nylander, *Ionians in Pasargadae* (Uppsala 1971). A thoughtful account of the history of scholarship on the role of Greek artists at Persepolis is found in Margaret Cool Root, "The Persepolis Perplex: Some Prospects Borne of Retrospect," in Denise Schmandt-Besserat, ed., *Ancient Persia: The Art of an Empire*, Invited Lectures on the Middle East at the University of Texas at Austin, Vol. 4 (Malibu 1980) 5–13.
 27. Margaret Cool Root, review of Michael Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis*, *AJA* 90 (1986) 113–14, citing also pertinent contributions by students of Romanesque sculpture.
 28. Mark Garrison made a pioneering effort in this area with his *Seal Workshops and Artists in Persepolis: A Study of Seal Impressions Preserving the Theme of Heroic Encounter on the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Tablets* (Diss. Univ. of Michigan 1988).
 29. Sylvie Lackenbacher, *Le roi bâtisseur; les écrits de construction assyriens des origines à Teglathphalar III* (Paris 1982). Textual sources on the active role of the royal patron in the creation of works of art are collected by Root (supra n. 24) 16–23.
 30. Milo C. Beach, *Early Mughal Painting* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987) esp. 80–95, 99–136, has demonstrated that a number of features or trends in the development of Mughal painting customarily attributed to the active influence of a royal patron should instead be considered as independent contributions by talented court artists or workshop directors. Such examples should caution students of ancient Near Eastern art against assuming a simple and unchanging form of royal patronage.
 31. In this volume, Margaret Cool Root studies artistic programming at Persepolis. The important study of Sasanian silver vessels by Prudence O. Harper and Pieter Meyers has broken new methodological ground for the identification of royal and non-royal workshops through technical and stylistic criteria: *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period*, Vol. I, *Royal Imagery* (New York and Princeton 1981) esp. 124–58.
 32. Here again I wish to acknowledge the approach elaborated by Umberto Eco (supra n. 6) for stimulating my own thoughts on the subject.
 33. Alfonso Archi, ed., *Circulation of Goods in Non-Palatial Context in the Ancient Near East*, *Incunabula Graeca* 82 (Rome 1984) esp. papers by Archi and Johannes Renger.
 34. Margaret Cool Root (supra n. 24). Neo-Assyrian programs: Irene J. Winter, "The Program of the Throneroom of Assurnasirpal II," in Prudence O. Harper and Holly Pittman, eds., *Essays on Near Eastern Art and Archaeology in Honor of Charles Kyrle Wilkinson* (New York 1981) 15–31; John M. Russell, "Bulls for the Palace and Order in the Empire: The Sculptural Program of Sennacherib's Court VI at Nineveh," *ArtB* 69 (1987) 520–39.
 35. Olof Pedersen, *Archives and Libraries in the City of Aššur. A Survey of the Material from the German Excavations*, Parts I and II, *Studia Semitica Uppsaliensis*, nos. 6 and 8 (Uppsala 1985 and 1986). Also Klaus R. Veenhof, ed., *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries*, *RAI* XXX (Leiden 1986).
 36. Claudio Barocas, "Les statues 'réalistes' et l'arrivée des Perses dans l'Égypte saïte," in *Gururājamañjarikā: Studi in onore di Giuseppe Tucci*, Vol. I (Naples 1974) 113–61.
 37. A number of stimulating papers dealing with this phenomenon are included in Michael Vickers, ed., *Pots and Pans: A Colloquium on Precious Metals and Ceramics in the Muslim, Chinese, and Graeco-Roman Worlds*, *Oxford Studies in Islamic Art* 3 (Oxford 1985).
 38. This methodological flaw detracts, for me, from the otherwise insightful study by Betty L. Schlossman, "Portraiture in Mesopotamia in the Late Third and Early Second Millennium B.C., Part I," *AfO* 26 (1978–79) 56–77; "Part II: The Early Second Millennium," *AfO* 28 (1981–82) 143–70.
 39. "Earless in Nineveh: Who Mutilated Sargon's Head?" *AJA* 84 (1980) 329–33; a more comprehensive study of the subject was outlined in a paper read at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., February 1988. Note also the interesting conclusions of Barocas (supra n. 36) 116–23, on the alleged "decapitation" of Saite portrait heads.

PART II

SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART



Artisans . . . Artists: Documentary Perspectives from Mari

Jack M. Sasson

A STUDENT ONCE CHALLENGED ME TO TELL HIM WHY WE PLACE IN museums patently homely objects recovered from the Near East. I considered failing him for the course; instead, I launched into a pretentious sermon, telling him that because we are humanists as well as antiquarians, we regard ourselves as heir to the great Mediterranean cultures and are legitimately compelled to understand, preserve, and propagate its legacy—placing ancient artifacts in museums and other repositories is one way to become more comfortable with the past. I waxed eloquent for a few more minutes, thinking of Naram-Sin's stele, of Hammurabi's head, of Amenhotep III's sad face, of Nefertiti's proud neck. I then recalled Idrimi's bulging eyes and remembered what those brutes from Elam did to Sargon's face.

How we make the Mesopotamian past less alien is an issue that we should consider during this symposium. We could begin by establishing a *bilan* on the way we differ from the ancient Mesopotamians when viewing and judging an artifact. For us to do so, we will need testimony whether the Mesopotamian artisans or their clients attributed values other than utilitarian to the products that they handled. The rub is that this is no easy matter, and I can offer you a revealing paradigm for my conclusions by harking back to my own past.

I grew up in an Arabic-speaking culture and, although I was but an adolescent when reaching these fair shores and although I grew up in a home that was not especially literary, I nevertheless cannot recall using a vocabulary that expressly discussed the beautiful. For example, when we wanted to speak of the beautiful, the attractive, or the like, we readily turned to a root with the consonants *he*, *lam*, and *waw*, which, as you know from your bites into halva (Arabic *hlawa*), most often qualified the sense of taste (as in taste buds). Other dialects of Arabic had different words (*jamil*, *zeyn*, *kuwayyis*) and, especially among Beiruti intellectuals, there were a few more expressions to suit the circumstances. However, it is also true that the Arabic I spoke is not particularly suited for mundane discourse on the arts and commonly turns to circumlocutions or calques when needing to do so.

Yet I know well that in my family women appreciated a delicate brooch, men fancied one car design over another, and all of us judged one movie star more winsome than another. We certainly had standards by which to judge quality, and we knew which artisan or clothier produced better than most. But whether we admired a product as an objet d'art rather than as a well-produced piece may not belong to the same category of discourse.

I want this brief anecdote to illustrate how careful we need to be when we search for the aesthetics of ancient Mesopotamia as well as when we strive to assess how conscious were its artisans of their own artistic influence on future cultures.

Simply stated, archaeology and art history give us ample reason to regard the ancients as discriminating; among other reasons, because we find them changing techniques in production, importing wares and artifacts from distant lands, and stylistically influencing their neighbors. Yet our inspection of written records rarely supports such a conviction. In this paper, I shall give you a lightly annotated overview of what we learn about our topic when inspecting the Mari archives, first surveying its relevant vocabulary before dwelling on the artisans, their craft, and their place in Mari society.

Language

The Mari citizen probably spoke Amorite but wrote in Akkadian, a Semitic language which, like Arabic, does not easily treat aesthetic topics. I have found a few verbs in the Mari archives that could be used when broaching such subjects; *dummuqum*, "to improve," *bunnûm*, "to beautify," *idûm*, "to know," *le'ûm*, "to be capable," *nukkulum*, "to execute in a refined manner," *šuklulum* and *quttum*, both meaning "to bring to a (perfect) end." However, I have noted that when controlling inanimate objects, these verbs almost invariably refer to the construction and furnishing of palaces and temples.¹ This is not surprising, for Mesopotamian royal figures, like mothers everywhere, classified whatever they produced as monumental and everlasting. One example may suffice: Shamshi-Adad (reigned ca. 1809–1776 B.C.) speaks of offering the god Itur-Mer a throne that was "carefully crafted according to differing techniques of the goldsmith's art, *ša ina hurāšim u mārē ummēnūtīm šumšu šutašbat*."²

Mari scribes qualified artisans as *mudûm*, "competent" and *taklum*, "reliable, experienced"; but animal fatteners and irrigators are similarly lauded. *naklum*, "clever," is once applied to a leather worker (ARMT XIII:44:6), while a reed-worker is qualified as "possessed of a secret skill," *ša niširtim* (ARMT XIV:119:17). The phrase *ša inšu namrat*, "clear-sighted," perhaps also "imaginative," refers to an architect *itinnum* (ARMT II:101:28), but to a dike specialist, *sēkirum*, as well (ARMT XIV:15:7').

Choice products are designated with sumerograms such as SAG, "first quality," and with Akkadian words, such as *damqum*, "good, attractive," *epšum*, "fabricated," or *nisqum*, "select." However, this vocabulary is used to differentiate among commodities that varied in the category and quality of production; it does not necessarily address their artistic worth. In fact, the remarkably chatty Mari letters, where we most expect to find personal convictions regarding the arts, are lacking any clue that either artisans or their products were appreciated aesthetically. This is so even when correspondents write about the performing arts—dancing and music—which were of particular interest to king Zimri-Lim (reigned 1820–1785 B.C.). The closest Mari scribes come to betraying an interest for the attractive is in a fragmentary letter that an unknown correspondent sent to one of the Mari kings.³ There, exotic place names are juxtaposed with a curiously asyndetic series of nouns to

convey thoughts that may have been alien to scribal training.

I have requested a snippet from my lord's (text: Ya[. . .]'s) garment so that, in my own home, I can inhale his good fragrance. I am one of my lord's faithful servants and want to speak without fear. I can return my lord's favor and will convey (to him) . . . whatever fancy item (*mimma ašlalê*)—(whatever) unusually created item (*ipša šipra nukra*)—that people bring me from Kanish, Kharshamna, and Khattusha.⁴

The reticence of the Mari letters to entertain the artistic is indeed striking. We have no letter informing us on the famous wall paintings that we all admire, and the only message which may have had them in mind—the famous letter from Aleppo conveying an Ugaritian's desire to locate Zimri-Lim's palace—is probably concerned only with learning the proper itinerary. We have no letter telling us that officials cared how artifacts were displayed, although we do have a couple relating the king's unhappiness with the deteriorating conditions of cultic objects. Here is a sliver from one of two messages on the subject, which the king sent a palace official. It is of interest to us also because of what Dr. Gates will say about it in her presentation.

About the protective-spirit statue that was manufactured, this female statue turned out badly and its mountings are not secure. If ever this protective-spirit statue is put in place, *the base of the mouth will surely show up*. I have seen it and became very upset. As soon as you hear this message of mine, (your men) should [dismantle] and reset in your presence the mountings of this statue as well as the tubing and they should reset them [*ARMT XVIII:2*; remaining lines fragmentary].⁵

Artisans

Mari Akkadian—or for that matter any Akkadian—does not seem to have a word for “artist.” There is a phrase, *mār ummênim*, which we commonly render by “artisan”; but the Mari scribe is often very broad in what the phrase covers. A census from late in Zimri-Lim's reign labels as *mārê ummêni*.⁶

- 7 garment workers
- 3 carpenters
- 4 singers
- 5 leather workers
- 2 fatteners
- 2 brewers (lú.šim)
- 1 carpet-maker (túg.du₈)⁷
- 1 palace guard (girseqûm)
- 1 reed-worker (atkuppu)⁸
- 1 door keeper
- 1 scribe
- 2 gardeners
- 1 blacksmith

mārê ummêni, therefore, labels persons of technical, rather than artistic, competence. Many other types of artisans—jewelers, for example—are not included in this list. On the other hand, a recently published memorandum (*ARMT XXIII:103*) about assigning work to *mārê ummêni* includes objects not ordinarily regarded as

artistic creations, such as wooden tablets. We have other information about the *mārē ummêni*: They were housed as a group in a Mari quarter bearing its name.⁹ Such a quarter was separated into wards, each one of which was subdivided into a number of *babātum*, “cells.” In each cell were found one or two craftsmen, their apprentices, and the war slaves allotted to them, including females and youngsters.¹⁰ From a letter the governor of Terqa sent his king, we learn that Terqa’s own artisan quarters were deemed so unattractive that no self-respecting priestess would want to dwell there (*ARMT* III:84).¹¹

mārē ummêni were assigned to caravans (*ARMT* I:17)¹² and allotted to visiting dignitaries (*ARMT* II:103).¹³ Those artisans with a reputation for quality moved from one town to another (for example, *ARMT* XXXI:42) but only after their lord permitted them to do so. Lest we imagine them to have some freedom of activity, it is well for us to realize that *mārē ummêni* received payment, garments, and rations from their rulers (*ARMT* VI:39). They depended upon palace bureaucrats for instruction on what to produce, and, when about to undertake an assignment, they collected the needed raw material from palace or temple depots.¹⁴ Here, it is particularly disconcerting to learn that to secure raw material artisans were ordered to melt down old jewelry (for example, *ARMT* VII:4; XXII:238–40, 251; XXV:360). Jean-Marie Durand has shrewdly noticed that when officials reported on their inspection of a finished product, it was only to assess whether craftsmen had managed to embezzle some of the metals they were allocated.¹⁵ All in all, the Mari records dampen any fantasy we may have about artists driven by an inner compulsion toward self-expression.

We know a bit about how long artisans worked on a particular commission. During Zimri-Lim’s early years, when he had to replace many cultic objects taken away by his predecessor, artisans were constantly preparing votive objects. Work on the throne for Adad of Makhanum is cited as early as the fifth year of his reign, but it was consecrated during the eighth year of his reign, at least three years later! This may indicate that artisans were not—or did not—feel under enormous pressure to produce.¹⁶ There is this delicious letter priestess Bakhlatum sent to the jeweler Ili-iddinam (*ARMT* X:109).

You have treated me as if you and I have never conversed and you do not solve my problem. Previously, I had given to you grain with which to buy stones for a necklace; but you have not done so (yet). *I had paid you* four years ago. While a jeweler did take the gold and silver, these toggle-pins have yet to be made.¹⁷ Now if you care for me, for the love of heaven, send me promptly that object and don’t keep it from me.¹⁸

[P.S.] If it does not promptly reach me, this commission will no longer be in effect.

Had I more space, I would give you personal profiles for a dozen silversmiths who have left us nice records of their activities spanning a 120-month sequence. Because jewelry, along with garments and textiles, was commonly exchanged among monarchs, silversmiths were kept busy creating and repairing; hence, they were not normally drafted for other work.¹⁹ Instead, I will assure you that the lives we reconstruct for these jewelers only confirm what A. Leo Oppenheim said long ago, “that the personality of the artist remains completely beyond our reach.”²⁰

Yet, so as not to leave you with just this disappointing assessment, I make two

more observations. The first is that we need not depend on the Mari evidence to generalize on the behavior of Near Eastern artisans. I have a hunch that, at least when it comes to ancient Egypt, the results may be different. The second is really a suggestion; it may well be that the ancients esteemed artifacts most when they enhanced the appearance of gods and human beings. Therefore, in order to recapture the medium in which they invested most readily their artistic creativity, we may need to look into their ceremonies and rituals, where the animate and the inanimate are choreographed into aesthetically pleasing tableaux. This will require us to collect as large a number of such ceremonies as possible and painstakingly to map out scenes, postures, and movement in the same way as Western scholarship has sought to better appreciate one aspect of Japanese aesthetics through minute dissection of the Japanese *cha no yu* (*sadō*) tea ceremony. For this suggestion to linger in your mind, it may be useful for me to leave you with patches quoted from the famous Ishtar ritual that took place in Mari.

In that early morning, the banquet of Ishtar is set out earlier than usual. . . . A brewer, a carpenter, a leather-worker, a cord-maker, a fuller, (all) the(se) artisans set their instrument in place. The barbers stand next to the artisans and (deposit their) razors. Once it is done . . . the emblems of the goddess are brought out from their containers and are placed, right and left, in Ishtar's temple. . . . The king puts on a (military) outfit. He sits on a sailor's chair, behind the lamentation-priests. One of the king's servants most pleasing to him sits by his side on a lower seat. . . . No one attends the king, but palace guards stand to his right and left. . . . As (lamentation-priests) begin intoning the an.nu.wa.še chant, the king rises to attention. One of the lamentation-priests stands up and begins intoning ir.si.ma.še to Enlil, accompanied by drums.

As the intonation begins, a (fire?-) eater does his trick, and a juggler juggles. After the jugglers, wrestlers come near. After the wrestlers, acrobats do somersaults. After the acrobats, women perform masquerades. . . . As they complete the an.nu.wa.še chant, the king sits.²¹

Notes

1. *dummuqum* is said of women who "embellish" horns (ARMT X:136). The passage is very difficult and the rendering is that of the CAD, Vol. Q, 140.
Yakhdun-Lim speaks of completing a temple that was expertly constructed and trimmed with masterly skill, *ša ipištam šukluluma ummēnūtam quttu*; Georges Dossin, "L'inscription de fondation de Iahdun-Lim, roi de Mari," *Syria* 32 (1955) 15:iv:78. A number of Mari inscriptions published by Dominique Charpin tell of various artifacts that were crafted artistically with gold; "Inscriptions votives d'époque assyrienne," *MARI* 3 (1984) 42, no. 1; 54, no. 5; 56, no. 7.
2. Text published by D. Charpin (supra n. 1) 42–44, and treated by K. R. Veenhof, "Note brève," *RAssyr* 79 (1985) 190. Albert Kirk Grayson also addresses this text; *Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia B.C. (to 1115 B.C.)*, RIM-AP I (Toronto 1987) 57, no. 5.
3. Possibly Yasmakh-Addu or, less likely, Yakhdun-Lim. The damaged letter was published long ago by Georges Dossin, *Recueil Georges Dossin: Mélanges d'Assyriologie (1934–1959)*, *Akkadica*, Supp. I (Leuven 1983) 194–201.
4. We get miserly details on royal sartorial taste when, frustrated by bureaucratic stonewalling, king Zimri-Lim tongue-lashes his servant Mukannishum about a ceremonial garment; Rouault, *Iraq* 39 (1977) 152–53.

5. The king had to write once more (ARMT XVIII:3) on the same topic.

I had earlier specifically written to you with regard to the work on the protective-spirit statue which had turned out badly. (Your men) should now dismantle the mountings of the protective-spirit statues in order to set more securely. The tubings are not secure, their openings [lines 10b-5' fragmentary]. . . .

Act in such a way that there could be no blemish on this protective-spirit statue.

Note also two other letters the king sent to Mukannishum.

My lord had ordered me as follows: "Before my arrival, they should test the protective-figures in dancing poses and the railings for the Palm-Tree courtyard." Upon my own arrival, (workers) managed to stabilize the protective-figures in dancing poses, but Ibbi-Addu, the metal-worker who is to make the railing, was not in town, having gone to (the village of) Khanat [ARMT XIII:16].

The gur₇me of gold which Qishti-Mamma has manufactured, an *alum* of gold has fallen out from its midst. If a manufactured *alum* is available from Qishti-Mamma, send (one) quickly to Terqa.

If it is not so, that is, if there is no manufactured *alum*, provide Qishti-Mamma refined/processed gold, have him promptly manufacture a suitable (?) *alum*, then send it to me.

Should refined/processed gold not be available to you, take refined/processed gold from Addu-duri, and have him make an *alum* which he regards as fit to send to me [ARMT XVIII:1].

6. ARMT IX:27:i:35–ii:34 (24.IV.ZL 10'). This document expands on ARMT IX:24:i:36–ii:15, which was drafted a few weeks earlier; ARMT IX, pp. 340–41, and B. Lafont, "Le *šābum* du roi de Mari au temps de Yasmakh-Addu," in *Miscellanea Babylonica. Mélanges offerts à Maurice Birot* (Paris 1985) 162. Opposition with the *šut rēši*, "royal attendants," is addressed in ARMT XXIII, p. 519.
7. P. Steinkeller defines *túg. du₈* as carpets; *OrAnt* 19 (1980) 85–86 and ARMT XXIII, p. 300.
8. In 24, he is labeled a gardener; but this is because the scribe confused two persons who had the same name.
9. ARMT XXIV:138 records that in the king's presence gold was entrusted to Mukannishum at the house (é) of artisans, so that jewelers could make rings; this is also discussed in ARMT XXV:185, 186, and 202.

The term *tukkum* refers to the workshop of artisans; F. Joannes remarks on this setup in ARMT XXIII, pp. 145–46. For another term, see n. 10.

10. ARMT XXII:12 lists 191 men, 11 women, 42 boys, and 1 girl; assignment of the "artisans," service of Mukannishum, in the *bīt ti-gi-tim*; supervised by Kabi-Addu and Bunum-Addu. ARMT XXII:13 arranges "select workers among artisans" by *babātum*.

ARMT XXII:63 includes assignment of slaves to artisans; the text is enlarged by a fragment and reedited with commentary by P. Villard in ARMT XXIII, pp. 487–91.

11. Just a while ago, I had written that I have taken omens about the house of the former *ugbabtum*-priestess, that they were propitious and that God answered me affirmatively.

Now, however, we have deliberated with Shamash-našir and the house is not at all suitable as dwelling for an *ugbabtum*-priestess; in this house are living women weavers, hired men, and as many craftsmen as available [three lines damaged]. The palace personnel are assembled. . . .

This is what we discussed: the dwelling is not appropriate; it is adjacent to the palace chamber, where lives Ms. Kundulatum, the confectioner of sweets. However, when I had omens taken, the results were propitious and God did answer me affirmatively. This house was entirely well-suited as home for the *ugbabtum*-priestess.

My lord ought to deliberate about this house so that I can have the house ready ahead of the *ugbabtum*-priestess's arrival. Whatever his decision, my lord should send me complete instructions so that I can be ready to take action on the matter.

12. Shamshi-Adad tells his son to set up a caravan composed of ten Tilmun merchants, ten officers of Shamshi-Addu, and seven artisans; for collation, see Durand, *MARI* 3 (1984) 282. When Zimri-Lim travels to Yamkhad, his huge retinue includes artisans, especially jewelers; P. Villard, *UF* 18 (1987) 393 n. 57.
13. Yaqqim-Addu writes the king:

My lord wrote me about the artisans of Sumu-ditana, son of Hammurabi, who ran away. Following my lord's directives, I have given strict orders to the men of the outposts and gave warning to the king's representatives and the safety-officers, village by village. Should the artisans head toward this province, they can't escape.

Note the name of Sumu-ditana. The Babylonian prince was apparently getting his education in the palace of Mari. According to *ARMT* XXIV:242, he is listed among the Mari officials.
14. Payments are discussed in *ARMT* II:126. Yasim-Sumu writes the king of a complaint that "Since you are retaining the *payment* which you were to give the artisans, then my lord will act similarly from there." *naplastum* is addressed in *ARMT* XXIII, pp. 406–7, where it is analyzed as a form of payment artisans receive (grain or wool).

Artisans are commonly given gifts from palace supplies upon completing their tasks; *ARMT* XXIII:375.

Rouault's commentary (*supra* n. 4) and Joannes's comments in *ARMT* XXIII, pp. 133ff. talk about artisans receiving instructions and materials from administrators.
15. *MARI* 2 (1983) 138–39.
16. B. Lafont, *ARMT* XXIII, pp. 340–43.
17. Klein discusses the meaning of *tudittum*; "*tudittum*," *ZA* (1983). These items occur frequently in Mari inventories.
18. The document has "god and goddess," to reflect the heavenly realm.
19. Ana'ish/ Erissu-matum/ Idin-igi.kur/ Idin-Mama/ Ili-idinnam/ Qishti-nunu (?)/ Rimshi-El/ Sin-ibni/ Tab-sumu/ Yansib-Dagan/ Yar'ip-Abba/ Yantin-Addu/ Yashub-ashar.

kutimmum (kù.dim) is the usual term applied to jewelers, but we also find the broader *qurqurum* (urudu.nagar) applied to them: *ARMT* IX, pp. 312–13; XVIII, p. 243 n. 83.; XXI:300; XXI, p. 367; XXIII:182, 558, 561; XXIII, pp. 175–76.
20. A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 1st ed. (Chicago 1964) 329.
21. The full text is published by Georges Dossin, "Un rituel du culte d'Ištar provenant de Mari," *RAssyr* 35 (1938) 2–3.

Artisans and Art in Old Babylonian Mari

Marie-Henriette Gates

IT IS FORTUNATE THAT THE GARRULOUS MARI ARCHIVES ALLOW US TO eavesdrop on transactions between king Zimri-Lim and his craftsmen (as J. M. Sasson discusses in this volume). They compensate in part for the stingy artistic remains rejected by Hammurabi's soldiers when they brought the palace and its dynasty to an end at the close of the eighteenth century B.C. and carted off its finer portables to Babylon. The Mari archives refer to works of art and artistic production only obliquely, however. They discuss materials and technical issues and cannot be pressed for a treatise on aesthetics. We have been left few clues with which to appreciate how Mari's patrons viewed works of art, what role the artist played in their creation, or how they were intended to affect the viewer. I can thus present only tentative suggestions along such lines on the following topics: 1) the function of works of art; 2) the interaction and responsibility of patron and artist in the creation of commissioned works; 3) the qualities that determined the value of art; 4) the display of monumental art; and 5) whether antiquity per se increased the value of a work of art. My remarks apply specifically only to Mari in the first half of the second millennium B.C., although I will also discuss parallels from other periods and regions.

Old Babylonian Mari is not unusual in maintaining silence regarding its perception of art; on the contrary, it conforms to a general discretion on the subject during much of ancient Near Eastern history. One notable exception to this rule is an inscribed statue of the Neo-Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (reigned 858–824 B.C.), found in his arsenal at Nimrud.¹ It will serve to introduce by virtue of contrast the artistic climate in earlier Mari.

Shalmaneser III's votive statue was sculpted during one of the three rare historical phases of the ancient Near East that gave rise to a deliberate and successful artistic program. The Neo-Assyrian kings understood that art—like an army, a well-oiled bureaucracy, and routine taxation—could promote their political and territorial ambitions. Their artists were made to develop a canon of thematic and stylistic conventions that succeeded in translating their image as warriors and heroic kings to the four corners of their empire.² The Shalmaneser statue, illustrating the conventional portrayal of Assyrian kingship, was in fact destined for a temple to the god Adad located some distance from Nimrud.³ Its remarkable feature lies in Shalmaneser's concluding lines in the long dedicatory inscription carved on the king's skirt. Here he declares:

So that my lord Adad may be pleased whenever he is moved to look at it, I have had

made this statue of polished, shining, precious alabaster, whose artistic features are most beautiful to see [*ana dagali lulla*].⁴

Shalmaneser's remarks invite us, as critical viewers, to respond on several levels. First, although the Akkadian language used the word beauty sparingly, this king expressed himself in terms that imply an artistic and cultural environment in which aesthetic achievement was a desirable feature, and an essential one for monumental votive offerings. However, as a second reaction, we can only wonder at the gap between text and statue. Shalmaneser speaks of gleaming alabaster and high artistic quality, whereas we see (as his sculptor must have seen too) painted limestone and the stiff, heavy physique stenciled without variation for all depictions of Assyrian men.⁵ I must conclude that Shalmaneser's words were intended to enhance their medium and that his statue acted merely as a vehicle for the Assyrian king's dedication to his god.

At Mari, where neither texts nor works of art discuss the aesthetic angle of artistic production, the impression that monumental art again functioned as a vehicle for specific purposes is inescapable. Art, whether in the form of palace wall paintings or votive statues, was manufactured for commemoration or decoration and often for both functions, according to conventions shared by much of contemporary Mesopotamia. As with the later statue of Shalmaneser III, the Mari artistic repertoire from the Old Babylonian period relied on declaration of intent for its primary impact; appearance and style ranked second. The Mesopotamian craftsman, unlike his counterpart in Egypt,⁶ was not pushed to develop an aesthetic ideal because of religious and magical tenets embodied by his creations; on the contrary, minimal figural standards seem to have fulfilled the requirements of his profession.

To avoid passing subjective judgment on Middle Bronze Age art from Mari, I will approach the issue of function taking precedent over form from the impressions given by the Zimri-Lim palace archives. They indicate that a woodworker could as well be commissioned to construct a chariot as sculpt a statue, and that a smith was as likely to manufacture metal attachments for military equipment as a balustrade of decorative bronze figures.⁷ The fruits of these technicians' labors therefore merit the term "artifact" rather than "art," as Sasson has demonstrated. Statuary at Mari served to express a pious donor's devotion to his god, whose interest cannot have extended to art criticism: symbol and inscription sufficed. By the same principle, wall paintings in the Mari palace also represented functional art by elevating a room from a secular to a sacred level, or from domestic to royal status.⁸

But if artistic quality did not determine an artifact's value, on what basis was it appraised? Every indication points to prestige of material as the single determinant in evaluating artifacts, although the references here are again indirect. First, artisans in Old Babylonian Mari were classified according to the material they worked, rather than what they manufactured, which covered a broad range of items. Thus, material was conceived as taking precedent over finished product. Second, the Mari texts mention the common practice of reusing precious materials⁹ and channeling them into the manufacture of new statuary: it would imply that the artistic merits of an older sculpture could be disregarded.¹⁰ Finally, it was common to specify in a dedicatory inscription the materials used in a commissioned work, certainly because they improved the merit of the commission. Zimri-Lim, for example, favored

prestige materials, and he benefited from their reflected glory: his reign was assigned a year-name to celebrate the generous donation of an honor guard of bronze lions, which were installed on the esplanade leading up to Mari's Dagan temple.¹¹ While Parrot and his team recovered over seventy eye inlays suitable for sculptures that would support Zimri-Lim's claim, only two sadly corroded lions survived to protect the gate of the temple.¹² The sorry fate of his commission may well explain why stone was in some cases preferred to more precious metals. Some centuries earlier, Gudea of Lagash (reigned ca. 2130 B.C.), like his Akkadian predecessors, favored diorite—prestigious because it was imported, but valuable too because of its durability. Gudea proudly declares on one statue inscription: "this statue is neither of metal nor lapis-lazuli; no one has revetted it with copper, lead or iron: it is made of diorite."¹³ The statue would attest to his continued favor and patronage without risk of decay or recycling.

In a further effort to exploit the kudos derived from conspicuous expense, the patron of monumental art in Old Babylonian period Mari sought to project through his commission a deliberate image. Mari votive statuary, like Babylonian pieces of the same era, shows a preoccupation with the elegant dress distinctive to that period (fig. 1).¹⁴ This preoccupation is manifested in the elaborate folds, tassels, and fringes that embellish both the garments worn by governor Idi-ilum and a much-damaged female worshiper from Mari's Ishtar temple.¹⁵ Such attention to extravagance parallels a virtual obsession (to cite Sasson) recorded in the Mari palace correspondence



Fig. 1. Statue of Idi-ilum, steatite. Mari, Old Babylonian period. Height 41.5 cm. Louvre AO 19486.

on matters of clothing and textiles both for Zimri-Lim and his entourage, and for exclusive gifts. The prerogative of lavish and expensive clothing has often been associated with royal courts, as in more recent eras with the Ottoman sultans' monopoly on the manufacture of velvet.¹⁶ It follows that donors of votive statuary wished to be represented with the recognizable symbols of their status.

What role, then, did the Mari craftsman assume if material, theme, and detail were dictated to him by his patrons? That the artisan enjoyed little liberty for individual expression—and did not seem to seek it out—is surely indicated by the uniformity controlling artistic conventions during the Old Babylonian period. These conventions could adapt a standard type to any choice of materials and sizes with little variation. As illustration, the life-size limestone statue from Mari of a goddess with a flowing vase represents an excellent example of the competent but conventional early second millennium Mesopotamian repertoire.¹⁷ This protective deity was manufactured in a variety of sizes and media. From a neighborhood shrine at Ur, a small bronze statuette reproduces the Mari goddess's facial features and proportions especially closely, despite the difference in scale and material (fig. 2).¹⁸ She also stars with a twin on the "Investiture" painting from the court leading to the Mari palace throne room, in the same area where the statue itself was found smashed and scattered. Nonetheless, one aspect of the Mari statue can claim originality, although by the same token this novelty demotes her to the rank of garden statuary. The Mari goddess was actually a fountain. A channel pierced through the core of the statue from the base up to the hollowed vessel in her hands would have allowed water to flow out of the vase, just as on the "Investiture" wall painting: Parrot called it Zimri-Lim's version of the *grandes eaux* at Versailles.¹⁹ A letter from that king to his official



Fig. 2. Statuette of ^dLama, bronze. Hendursag chapel, Ur, Old Babylonian period. Height 9.8 cm. British Museum 123040.

Mukannishum indicates that the installation of this fountain caused them both considerable anguish.

About the protective-spirit [^dLama] statue that was manufactured, this female statue turned out badly and its mountings are not secure. If ever this protective-spirit statue is put in place, *the base of the mouth will surely show up*. I have seen it and became very upset. As soon as you hear this message of mine, (your men) should [dismantle] and reset in your presence the mountings of this statue as well as the tubing [ARMT XVIII:2, trans. J. M. Sasson].

Where these miracles took place cannot be precisely established, since the statue was wrenched from her original setting. Al-Khalesi²⁰ would place her and a hypothetical twin at the foot of the stairs at the east end of the Mari throne room (Room 66), where a water channel/siphon and carefully laid bitumen floor coatings invite some sort of waterworks. Al-Khalesi would transpose the remaining figures of the “Investiture” painting, especially those of the central panel, to the podium at the top of the stairs, thus recreating in the throne room a shrine with appropriate cult statuary. Parrot’s team did indeed uncover a toppled diorite/diabase statue of the early Mari governor Ishtup-illum²¹ at the foot of these stairs (fig. 3), along with two brick and three stone socles suitable for statuary.²² Since the evidence points to their original location as the Room 66 podium, the Ishtup-illum statue (as single representative for its missing companions) can serve to open a brief discussion on the settings in which art at Mari was placed, as well as what qualified a statue to be displayed for posterity.

Zimri-Lim’s lions and goddess fountain fulfilled both votive and decorative purposes. Statues such as Ishtup-illum’s, however, functioned as commemorative pieces. They were found in the Mari palace in the two areas securely identified as cultic centers: its southeast wing (around Room 120) and the stepped podium end of the Zimri-Lim throne room (Room 65–66). Further votive statues, attested by fragments badly smashed in the city’s destruction, were dedicated in the contemporary Ishtar temple²³ and no doubt in other temples as well. One might speculate what criteria determined the preservation or eventual discarding of these statues. Ishtup-illum governed Mari several generations before Zimri-Lim,²⁴ but he seems to have survived dynastic upheavals without harm, since he was still on view when the palace was destroyed. Here perhaps is a testimonial for Gudea’s enthusiasm for diorite, unless Ishtup-illum can be thought to have served as a behavioral model for his successors; his statue certainly cannot have served as an aesthetic model.

Other votive statues from the Zimri-Lim palace suggest an explanation for the longevity of certain sculptural personalities. Two near-identical statues bearing dedicatory inscriptions that name Puzur-Ishtar of Mari, his brother Milaga, and their father Tura-Dagan, active several generations earlier than Zimri-Lim, were excavated in Babylon where they had been housed in a museum assembled by Nebuchadnezzar (reigned 604–562 B.C.) nearly 1000 years later.²⁵ There is no reason to doubt that these statues arrived in Babylon as part of Hammurabi’s booty, however, and that they had originally been displayed somewhere in Mari at the time of Zimri-Lim’s defeat. The key to this reconstruction of events is the horned crown, an attribute denoting deification, worn by Puzur-Ishtar.²⁶ As a representation of a god, this statue became a prize victim to be carried off by a victorious army; hence, its



*Fig. 3. Statue of Ishtup-illum, diorite/
diabase. Mari, Old Babylonian period.
Height 1.52 m. M.800, Aleppo Museum.*

eventual reappearance among Nebuchadrezzar's curios.²⁷ At Mari, however, there can be only one reason for displaying a deified king for so many generations: the statue depicted a deceased king worshiped in a formal cult instituted by his heirs, a practice well attested by historical and literary references.²⁸ The inscription on the Puzur-Ishtar statue suggests that it originally represented and honored Puzur-Ishtar's father, Tura-Dagan, and thus served a monumental rather than a strictly votive function.²⁹ If such sculptures commemorated for posterity its dynasties of former kings, then one can understand the presence of Ishtup-illum's statue in Zimri-Lim's throne room.

Mari did not automatically revere all old cultic or votive artifacts, however, as has already been implied by the reuse of precious materials. Stelae, even when depicting deities, could be unceremoniously recycled into doorsockets, thresholds,



Fig. 4. Doorsocket, stone. Room 149, Mari palace, Old Babylonian period. Width 36 cm. Louvre AO 28542.

or rubble building material (fig. 4).³⁰ I conclude that “antiquity” improved an artifact’s value only when combined with historical merit; to reach a respectable age depended in large part on durable materials and political esteem.

In sum, the artistic environment in Old Babylonian Mari fostered the production of a conventional repertoire of types and styles that answered the precise worldly aspirations of its patrons, and not the imagination and creative involvement of its craftsmen. The Mari artist was in fact a technician, trained in a broad profession. It is therefore not surprising that his work impresses us by its solidity, not by its grace; by its adherence to iconographic and stylistic norms, not by its originality; and by its cultural message, not by its timeless artistry.

It is a pleasure to thank Ann C. Gunter in writing for organizing this remarkable conference, and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery for its inspiring setting.

Notes

1. The statue had been damaged and was apparently in Nimrud awaiting repair. M. Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains*, Vol. II (New York 1966) 385, fig. 110; J. V. Kinnier Wilson, “The Kurba’il Statue of Shalmaneser III,” *Iraq* 24 (1962) 90–115.
2. I. J. Winter, “Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs,” *Studies in Visual Communication* 7 (1981) 2–38; J. M. Russell, *Sennacherib’s ‘Palace Without a Rival’: A Programmatic Study of Texts and Images in a Late Assyrian Palace* (Diss. Univ. of Pennsylvania 1985).
3. The statue’s inscription specifies Kurba’il, located by Kinnier Wilson in the upper Tigris valley (supra n. 1) 98–99.

4. Translation adapted from Kinnier Wilson (supra n. 1) 96, lines 36–37.
5. Kinnier Wilson (supra n. 1) 91, commented on the discrepancy between the term *gišnugallu* (commonly translated as “alabaster”), as specified in the inscription to describe the statue material, and the actual stone from which the statue was carved. He suggested that *gišnugallu* must have referred to a broad variety of stones. Like other Assyrian sculpture, the statue was originally polychrome, but only black paint on the hair, beard, and necklace has been preserved.
6. C. Aldred presents a brief summary of the relationship between form and function in Egyptian art in *Egyptian Art in the Days of the Pharaohs: 3100–320 B.C.* (London 1980) 11–18.
7. J. M. Sasson addresses this in his paper; the decorative metal balustrade in the “Court of the Palms” of the Mari palace is discussed in *ARMT* XIII:16, 40.
8. It was the painted decoration in restricted sectors of the Mari palace that suggested in large part to the excavator, A. Parrot, the identification of “royal apartments” (the northwest sector), a royal audience podium (Room 132 off Court 131), and a royal banquet hall (Room 220); A. Parrot, *Mission archéologique de Mari*, Vol. II (Paris 1958), no. 1, *Le palais: architecture* 184–85, and no. 2, *Le palais: les peintures* vii. Whether the rooms are correctly identified is not at issue; their decoration, like that of Mesopotamian temples, set them apart from their surroundings.
9. P. Talon, *ARMT* 24:219–21.
10. J. M. Durand reaches similar conclusions from the casual attitude in the Mari archives toward melting down statuary if it exhibited any structural defect; “Relectures d’*ARMT* VIII:11, *ARMT* VIII, 89 et le travail du métal à Mari,” *MARI* 2 (1983) 138. The curious circumstances attending the rededication of a cult statue to Shamash by the ninth century B.C. Babylonian governor Nabu-apla-iddina, as described on a stone tablet found at Sippar, again imply that statuary was replaced whenever fashion (or misfortune) dictated: the text stresses that a cult statue could not be renewed without using its predecessor as model; J. Oates, *Babylon* (London 1979) 108–9 and fig. 74.
11. G. Dossin, “Inscriptions de fondation provenant de Mari,” *Syria* 21 (1940) 167. Durand now questions the identity of the temple and considers the cult of Itur-Mer more likely there than Dagan’s; the lions would thus have guarded a city gate called the “Dagan gate,” and would be a different dedication from the two found in the vicinity of the temple assigned to Dagan by Parrot; J. M. Durand, “Différentes questions à propos de la religion,” *MARI* 5 (1987) 611–12. The year-name itself cannot on the present evidence be attributed within the imperfectly known sequence of Zimri-Lim’s regnal years; J. M. Sasson, personal communication.
12. Bronze over wood core; limestone eyes and teeth, slate pupils; length 0.7 m; in A. Parrot, *Mari, capitale fabuleuse* (Paris 1974) 104–5 and pl. 22.
13. Gudea Statue B (“l’architecte au plan”): section 7, lines 49–56; in M. Lambert and J. R. Tournay, “La statue de Gudea,” *RAssyr* 45 (1951) 49–66. The statue is discussed by A. Moortgat in *Die Kunst des Alten Mesopotamien* (Cologne 1967) 68, and by many others. D. Potts has recently revived the question of diorite/diabase/olivine-gabbro sources that were accessible to the Akkadian and Neo-Sumerian kings, who claim their provenance as Magan. He concludes that the geographical name Magan described both Oman and coastal Iran—i.e., the coasts bordering on the Persian Gulf; “The Booty of Magan,” *OA* 25 (1986) 271–85.
14. M. 1349; in A. Parrot, *Mission archéologique de Mari*, Vol. II, no. 3, *Le palais: monuments et documents* (Paris 1959) 16–22, figs. 13–19 and pls. 9–11.
15. M. 434, height 10.9 cm.; in A. Parrot, *Mission archéologique de Mari*, Vol. I, *Le temple d’Ishtar* (Paris 1956) 111–12 and pl. 45.
16. M. Levey discusses the velvet factories at Bursa (and later Üsküdar) in *The World of Ottoman Art* (New York 1975) 25; as does J. M. Rogers, H. Tezcan, and S. Delibaş in *The Topkapi Saray Museum: Costumes, Embroideries, and Other Textiles* (London 1986) 15–17.
17. M. 1100, height 1.42 m; in Parrot (supra n. 14) 5–11, figs. 4–8. Fragments were found in Room 64 (body in two pieces) and Court 106 (head found in basin). For another illustration, W. Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, *PropKunst* 14 (Berlin 1975) fig. 160b.
18. P. R. S. Moorey, *Ur ‘of the Chaldees’: A Revised and Updated Edition of Sir Leonard*

Woolley's "Excavations at Ur" (Ithaca 1982) 209–10.

19. Parrot (supra n. 14) 9.
20. Y. Al-Khalesi, *The Court of the Palms: A Functional Interpretation of the Mari Palace*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 8 (Malibu 1978) 37–45 and pl. 6.
21. Parrot (supra n. 14) 2–5 and pls. 1–3.
22. M. 88; in A. Parrot, *Mission archéologique de Mari*, Vol. II, no. 1, *Le palais: architecture* (Paris 1958) 134–38.
23. These include fragments of at least two monumental bearded male statues; Parrot (supra n. 15) 110–11 and pl. 44.
24. Ishtup-illum is considered a contemporary of Gudea of Lagash and one of a succession of governors (*shakkanakku*) ruling concurrently with the Ur III dynasty. Puzur-Ishtar succeeds him six (?) generations later; J.-M. Durand, "La situation historique des *shakkanakku*: nouvelle approche," *MARI* 4 (1985) 156–57. The difficulty, however, remains in bridging the chronological gap between the last of the named *shakkanakku*, and the arrival of the Lim dynasty with Yakhdun-Lim, Zimri-Lim's father (?); D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand, "La prise du pouvoir par Zimri-Lim," *MARI* 4 (1985) 336–38.
25. E. Nassouhi, "Statue d'un dieu de Mari, vers 2225 av. J.-C.," *AfO* 3 (1926) 109–14. Tura-Dagan and Puzur-Ishtar are linked by textual evidence to the Ur III dynasty; recently J.-M. Durand, "L'organisation de l'espace dans le palais de Mari: le témoignage des textes," *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome*, Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg: Travaux du Centre de Recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce antiques 9 (Leiden 1987) 40 n. 1. Durand also discusses the placement of royal statues, beginning with Sargon's, on the podium of the throne room as part of a cult involving deceased kings (the *kispu*, but attested at Mari no earlier than the time of Shamshi-Adad), or as a portrait gallery of illustrious predecessors; Durand (supra n. 24) 159 n. 55.
26. Illustrated in Orthmann (supra n. 17) fig. 160a.
27. The common practice of removing cult statues from the defeated enemy and transferring them to the victor's capital is illustrated on a relief of Tiglath-pileser III from Nimrud, BM 118934; J. B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures*, 2d ed. (Princeton 1969) fig. 538. The practice is much older, however, and referred to already in Early Dynastic texts: king Enshakushana of Nippur (reigned ca. 2470 B.C.) dedicates statues seized in Akshak and Kish; J. S. Cooper, *Sumerian and Akkadian Royal Inscriptions*, Vol. I, *Presargonic Inscriptions* (New Haven 1986) 105, Uk 4, line 1.
28. Parrot (supra n. 14) 21 n. 1, suggested this, but without elaboration. The cult of deceased kings in the ancient Near East was treated in a brief article by M. Bayliss, "The Cult of Dead Kin in Assyria and Babylonia," *Iraq* 35 (1973) 122–25, who emphasized that for the Old Assyrian/Old Babylonian period, the number of generations included in the rituals was extensive. W. W. Hallo enlarged on this topic at the annual meetings of the American Oriental Society; see abstracts for the 198th meeting in Chicago, March 1988:61. The cult involved statues of kings but was temporarily interrupted during Hammurabi's reign—a reform that would not, however, have affected Mari. More troublesome is the date of the Puzur-Ishtar statue, which resembles the developed style of the Old Babylonian period more than it does Neo-Sumerian statuary.
29. Tura-Dagan is named together with Puzur-Ishtar on one of the statue's two inscriptions, while the second inscription names Puzur-Ishtar and his brother. The inscriptions on the second statue were irretrievably defaced; Nassouhi (supra n. 25) 113–14 and Dossin (supra n. 11) 165.
30. M. 1416; Parrot (supra n. 14) 27–30, figs. 24–25 and pl. 14, depicting awkwardly carved (and badly damaged) deities.

Mesopotamian Historical Consciousness and the Production of Monumental Art in the Third Millennium B.C.

Jerrold S. Cooper

THIS SHORT PAPER WITH A RATHER AMBITIOUS TITLE IS INTENDED AS A report on research in progress. Any conclusions are necessarily deferred, to be presented as part of a long monograph on Mesopotamian historiography. The following discussion will be programmatic in nature, outlining some of the major problems involved in understanding the relationship between the representations and texts on third-millennium monuments, and the ideological context in which these monuments were produced.

The phrase “Mesopotamian historical consciousness” in the title does not refer to the Mesopotamian awareness and uses of the past, which have been amply documented.¹ Nor will any attempt be made to discover which ancient texts may be “historically accurate,” whatever that might mean.² Rather, this paper focuses on the ancient Mesopotamians’ consciousness and understanding of historical change. Our textual evidence for this sort of historical consciousness in the third millennium is of two kinds.

The large corpus of Sumerian literary texts dealing with third-millennium history is commonly referred to as “literary-historical” texts or “the historical tradition.” Written at the end of the third millennium, these texts are concerned with explaining the rise and fall of two great empires: the empire of Sargon of Akkad (reigned 2334–2279 B.C.), and the Third Dynasty of Ur (2112–2004 B.C.). Most are poetic compositions: the Sumerian Sargon Legend, the Curse of Akkad, and the various city laments, especially the two known as the Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur and the Lamentation over Sumer and Ur.³ Not poetry is the series of literary letters purporting to be correspondence between the kings of Ur and their officials, whose main themes are the loosening of royal control on the empire’s periphery, the intrusions of the Amorites, and the gradual assertion of a counter-sovereignty by one governor who eventually established his own kingdom at Isin.⁴ And to these literary texts I would add the Sumerian King List, for reasons amply demonstrated by P. Michalowski.⁵

All of these texts share two assumptions: sovereignty is possessed by only one Babylonian city at a time, and this sovereignty is periodically transferred from one city to another. In the oft-quoted words of the Lamentation over Sumer and Ur, “has anyone ever seen a royal dynasty that remained (forever) paramount?”⁶ In all of the texts except the Sumerian King List, the transfer of sovereignty is the result of a decision of the great gods.

The second group of texts that tries to account for historical change consists of royal inscriptions dating from just after 2500 B.C. and the royal hymns of the Third Dynasty of Ur.⁷ This group shares with the first the assumption that political authority in the form of kingship is conferred and extended by the gods. But the literary-historical texts view the periodic transfer of kingship as both inevitable and arbitrary, affected little or not at all by the character of an individual ruler. As Ibbi-Sin (reigned 2038–2004 B.C.), the ill-fated last ruler of Ur, is made to say in one of his pseudographic letters, “At the moment, Enlil hates me, and he hates his son Sin (the moon-god and tutelary god of Ur); he is giving Ur to a foreigner.”⁸ Nowhere do we find any motive at all for Enlil’s action, either in taking sovereignty away from Ibbi-Sin, or in giving it to a particular “foreigner.”

Such an attitude would never do for royal inscriptions and hymns, which, as apologies for the ruler of the moment, necessarily see the possession of kingship as evidence of the ruler’s special qualities and relationship to the gods. Furthermore, these texts express the hope that through pious deeds the ruler can insure unending divine favor; that is, they implicitly seek to break the cycle of eternal dynastic change postulated by the literary-historical texts and the Sumerian King List. If the king is necessarily and always the divine favorite, then the enemy, who is a tool of the gods in the literary-historical tradition, is, in the literature of the palace, an impious force working contrary to divine will. In the Curse of Akkad, Enlil himself brings the Gutis down from the mountains to scourge Babylonia.⁹ But the long inscription of Utu-ḫegal of Uruk (reigned 2120–2114 B.C.) celebrating his expulsion of the Gutis calls them “people who acted violently (?) toward the gods, who brought Sumer’s kingship to a foreign land.” Here, Enlil has commissioned Utu-ḫegal to rid the land of the rapacious intruders.¹⁰

Both the view of the literary-historical texts (that the transfer of sovereignty is arbitrary and inevitable) and the view of royal inscriptions and hymns (that the current king has earned his position and may keep it indefinitely) come from established elite circles which overlapped considerably. The first view is an ideology developed in response to specific historical conditions—the rise and fall of two great empires—in the context of a very particular theology. The second represents the bending of this ideology into usable propaganda for the royal incumbent, a kind of reconciliation of ideology with power.

Unlike texts, art—especially monumental art—is exclusively palace-sponsored and unabashedly intended to glorify the royal patron. The same intellectuals who turn the royal propaganda mill may on their own time produce and transmit more thoughtful historical reflections. Artisans do not have that possibility. Clay is cheap, but stone, wood, and precious metals are not. The scarcity of these materials explains not only why there is no artistic counterpart to the literary-historical tradition, but also why there is hardly any commemorative monumental art¹¹ preserved from ancient Mesopotamia (excluding, to be sure, the Neo-Assyrian reliefs). Pillage and reuse have left little but fragments in Babylonia: the Stele of the Vultures, fragmentary Sargonic stelae, the Ur-Nammu stele.¹² What well-preserved monuments we do have, we owe primarily to Shutruk-Nahunte I (reigned ca. 1170 B.C.) and other Elamite kings who looted Mesopotamian masterpieces such as the Naram-Sin and

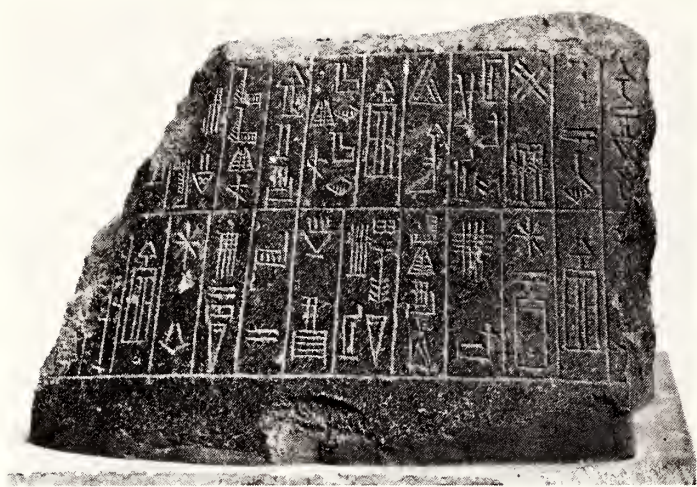


Figs. 1 and 2. Stele of Sargon (obverse and reverse), diorite. Susa, Akkadian period. Height 46 cm. Louvre AO Sb 1.

Hammurabi stela¹³ and collected them in Susa, whence they were transferred to the Louvre.¹⁴

Yet, despite the pathetic remnants, there is textual evidence documenting a flourishing tradition of monumental bas-relief and sculpture in the round. Only one preserved monument of Sargon exists (figs. 1, 2); yet there were at least sixteen large monuments of Sargon in the Enlil temple at Nippur alone, according to a collection of inscriptions from these monuments made by Old Babylonian scribes. In addition to Sargon, there are copies of inscriptions on monuments in Nippur of Rimush (reigned 2315–2307 B.C.), Manishtushu (reigned 2306–2292 B.C.), and Naram-Sin (reigned 2254–2218 B.C.), as well as Shu-Sin (reigned 2037–2029 B.C.) of the Third Dynasty of Ur. From Ur we have Old Babylonian copies of Naram-Sin inscriptions, and there are scattered additional Old Babylonian copies of third millennium inscriptions that would push the number of known lost monuments up toward fifty.¹⁵ To that number we would also have to add the numerous monuments mentioned in year names and administrative texts.

At least one of these monuments is actually preserved, although “preserved” is perhaps too kind a term (figs. 3–5). This fragment of a leg and robe of Manishtushu of Akkad is a remnant of a statue, and its inscription is duplicated in the collection of copies from Nippur. In a gesture of self-reference not uncommon to such monuments, the text describes the quarrying of the stone for this very statue, or series of statues with the same or nearly the same inscription.¹⁶ A second, better-preserved statue from that era bears a later inscription, which was added by Shutruk-Nahunte



Figs. 3, 4, and 5. Fragments of statue of Manishtushu, diorite. Susa, Akkadian period. Louvre AO Sb 51.



when he brought it to Elam (fig. 6).

We learn from the happy coincidence of monument and copy that we are not to imagine all of the monuments whose inscriptions were copied to be bas-reliefs; some, like Manishtushu's, were sculptures in the round (the term *šalmu* can mean "statue" or "bas-relief"). Furthermore, we should not imagine them all to be stone. In one of the copied inscriptions, Naram-Sin tells us that "he made a gold statue of (that is, celebrating) the eternity of his power and the battles which he won." An administrative text records the receipt of nearly three pounds of lapis lazuli for a copper "statue" of Shu-Sin of Ur as victor of the Upper and Lower Seas.¹⁷ Nor are figurines meant, either. The amount of lapis, if used for a beard, suggests a statue of life-size proportions, such as the bronze head from Nineveh, perhaps of Naram-Sin (fig. 7), or the lower body of a bronze statue dedicated by Naram-Sin found at Bassekti.¹⁸

An important task in the attempt to understand the role of such art as royal propaganda and the relationship between representation and inscription is to reconstruct the monuments recorded on the Old Babylonian copies of Akkadian inscriptions. First, we must study the terminology that was used in scribal notes accompanying the copies, which gave the location of the inscriptions in relation to the representations. Sometimes it is relatively straightforward: in the Manishtushu example cited earlier, the scribal notes on the Old Babylonian copy record the



*Fig. 6. Statue of Manishtushu, diorite.
Susa, Akkadian period. Height 94 cm.
Louvre AO Sb 47.*



*Fig. 7. Head of Akkadian ruler, bronze.
Nineveh, Akkadian period. Height 36 cm.
Iraq Museum 11331.*



*Fig. 8. Stele of Naram-Sin, sandstone.
Susa, Akkadian period. Height 2 m.
Louvre AO Sb 4.*

existence and contents of an “inscription on its pedestal.” In fact, the inscription appears on the actual monument (see fig. 3), but not on what *we* would call the pedestal. Some notes make reference to “captives on its pedestal,” which must refer to something like the Sargonic pedestal found at Susa, now in the Louvre, portraying slain enemies who are identified by name.¹⁹ Note the description of a Shu-Sin monument that says that the captured enemies are identified by inscriptions, but that their guards are not.²⁰ “Inscription on the statue, its pedestal is uninscribed” may describe a statue inscribed on robe or shoulder, or something like the Naram-Sin stele (fig. 8), where the inscription is on the body of the monument.²¹ But in many cases the scribal notes are too elliptical or seemingly contradictory for us to understand. We must, for example, learn to distinguish between the *ki-gal* and *ki-gub* of a monument and to determine just what the base or pedestal of a bas-relief might be. On some the inscription is found below the lowest register (see fig. 2), but on the Ur-Nammu stele the inscription is in a band between the first and second registers (fig. 9). Is this perhaps the “upper base” that some scribal notes distinguish from a monument’s “lower base”?²² In reconstructing some of the more elaborate monuments, such as the one commemorating Shu-Sin’s victory over Indasu, which the Old Babylonian scribes say showed Shu-Sin with his foot upon Indasu in a gesture of triumph and Indasu’s allies bound and captured on either side, it must be remembered that bas-relief monuments from the third millennium could be oddly shaped and many-sided.²³

Sometimes a copy of an inscription is interrupted with a scribal note and a caption. Does this mean that the inscription on the monument was in two parts, separated by captioned figures? In at least one case, three inscriptions that seem to be treated separately by the scribal copyist—and are so taken by modern scholars—may be parts of the same monument.²⁴

A topic that has been broached but never discussed thoroughly is the terminology for monuments.²⁵ We have seen that the monuments called *alan* in Sumerian and *šalmu* in Akkadian could be either bas-reliefs or freestanding sculpture. This term refers to sculpture in the round specifically and more generally to any figural representation. The literal word for monument in Sumerian, *na-rù-a* (Akkadian *narû*), can be used to distinguish bas-relief type monuments from statues. Meaning literally “erected stone,” it describes anything from large bas-relief monuments, such as the Stele of the Vultures, to small stone tablets and probably even clay boundary markers. The actual carved design or sculpture on a monument is the Sumerian *giš-ḫur* (Akkadian *uṣurtu*), a term that has a broad semantic field extending from “incised design, drawing” to “plans” and “rules, regulations.” But the act of carving or sculpting was probably *gul*,²⁶ the same word used for cutting seals, and the sculptor was *bur-gul*, the common term for seal-cutter, but more generally for stonecutter. Finally, the ruler can be quite specific about a sculpture when he refers to it as a *tamšīlu*, “likeness,” of himself, of course.

The inscription on the monument, too, is referred to in several ways. The inscription as a whole is *mu-sar-ra* in Sumerian (Akkadian *tuppu*), and most often the curses on Sargonic monuments are directed to protecting the inscription. But some curses, often added after the initial curse, protect more specifically the name, *šūmu*, of the ruler, against replacement by the name of another. Ironically, this is exactly

what happened in the Sargonic monuments preserved at Susa (see figs. 6, 8). In later periods, one curse could protect both inscription and name. Recently, J. Klein has discovered a new Sumerian word for inscription, *maš-dara₃*, borrowed from the Akkadian, in a hymn of the great king Shulgi of Ur (reigned 2094–2047 B.C.), who, according to the new interpretation, brags about his skill in “writing cuneiform inscriptions on pedestals.”²⁷

I. Winter has written at length about the text-image relationship on ancient monuments in terms of both specific correspondences between text and image and between the organization of the visual and the textual material on the same monument.²⁸ I will only comment on the specific correspondences between text and image, which is a notoriously difficult problem in Mesopotamian art. This is



Figs. 9 and 10. Stele of Ur-Nammu (reverse and detail of obverse), limestone. Ur, Third Dynasty of Ur. Height ca. 3 m. Philadelphia, The University Museum CBS 17676.



Figs. 11 and 12. *Stele of the Vultures of Eannatum (details of obverse and reverse), limestone. Tello, Early Dynastic III period. Height 1.8 m. Louvre AO 50.*

especially true for the third millennium, where, in Sargonic glyptic, we have a treasure trove of specific imagery but hardly any textual material that could provide a satisfactory interpretation.²⁹ Even when monumental art is accompanied by text, the text-image relationship is often complementary and not explanatory. Contemporary texts may be searched in vain for relevant references to the measuring line and cord held out to Ur-Nammu on the Ur-Nammu stele (fig. 10), or a few centuries later to Hammurabi on his stele.³⁰ (As these objects metamorphose in later centuries into "rod and ring," we do get confusing textual references to them. Once they are called "scepter and ring," and another time "weapon and ring.") The jarring disjunction between written and visual is perhaps most striking in representations of the ruler such as these. E. Strommenger notes that "the royal insignia of cap, scepter, throne, crozier and reins mentioned . . . in texts cannot be identified in the representations." J. Krecher, in his discussion of the textual evidence for royal insignia, remarks that "the discrepancy with regard to the archaeological tradition still remains incomprehensible."³¹

An exhaustive comparison of text and image on third-millennium monuments is beyond the scope of my paper. Instead, I will probe a thematically selective portion of the corpus to demonstrate the emerging complexity of the relationship between the scribal and artistic repertoires. Both scribes and artists repeated clichés to represent dead and captured enemies. Some of these correspond: prisoners captured in a divine battle-net on the Stele of the Vultures (figs. 11, 12) immediately recall the divine battle-nets repeatedly invoked in the text of the stele, and a similar net appears on a Sargonic stele.³² The famous burial mound on the Stele of the Vultures is an exact visual calque of the Sumerian phrase "he heaped up burial mounds for them," used over and over again as part of the stock victory statement in Pre-Sargonic inscriptions and found in Old Akkadian inscriptions as well.³³ In fact, the image here corresponds too literally to the idiomatic phrase; there's something comic about the two canephores climbing the enormous pile of corpses to deposit their loads. Is this

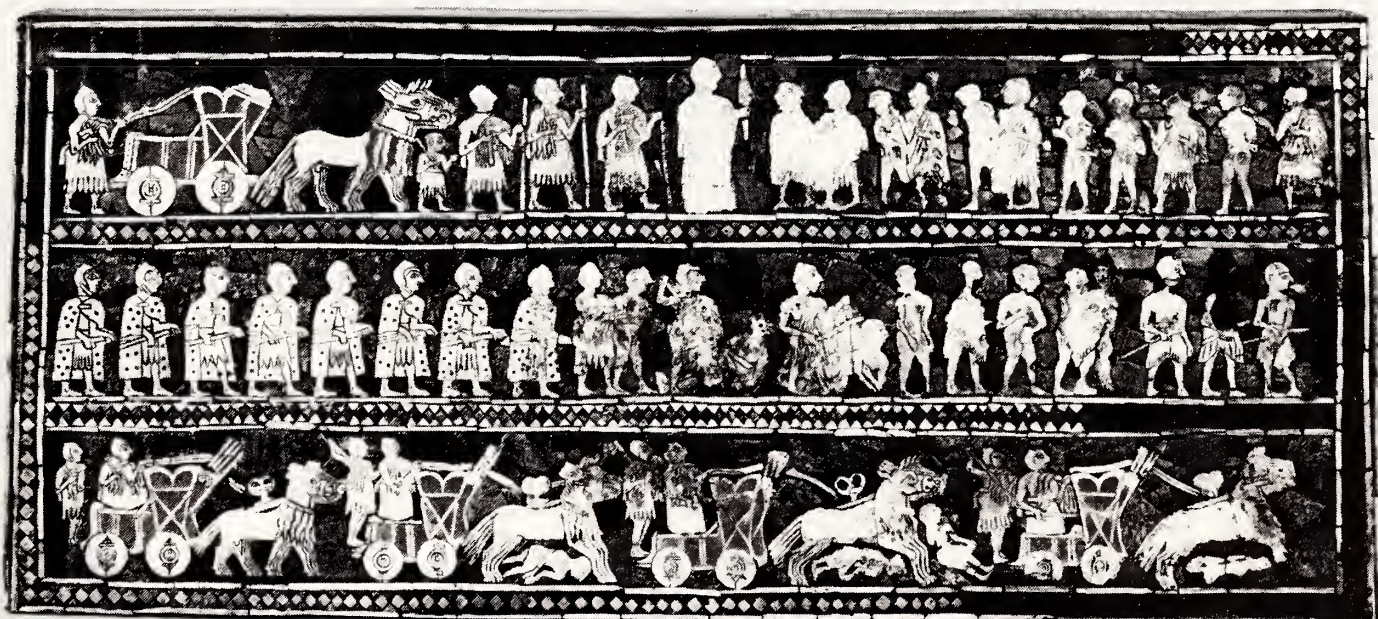


Fig. 13. Fragment of stele from Nasiriyah, alabaster. Nasiriyah, Akkadian period. Height 21.2 cm. Iraq Museum 59 205.

image, perhaps, a pun on the Sumerian idiom? Bound prisoners, corresponding to the literal meaning of the Akkadian *kamû*, "to bind," but used more generally as the standard word for "to capture," are found on the monuments,³⁴ as are the stocks that the inscriptions say are sometimes used (fig. 13).

Bound prisoners can be found in Pre-Sargonic representations, too (fig. 14). But here there is also a visual cliché that has no counterpart in texts: the enemy corpses trampled by the victors. On this monument the corpses are trampled by chariotry; on the Stele of the Vultures it is the infantry that tramples (see fig. 11) but textual

Fig. 14. Standard of Ur (war side), shell, limestone, and lapis lazuli. Ur, Early Dynastic III period. Height 21.6 cm. British Museum 121201.



references to trampling enemy corpses do not occur.³⁵ Another visual cliché that I am unable to document textually is the vultures' repast in which birds of prey dine on dead enemies, an image that gave its name to the Stele of the Vultures but is found on the Sargon stele as well. There is also no textual counterpart to the torture and execution of prisoners found on the Tello stele; the violent imagery is perhaps appropriate, since the fragmentary inscription records the forced transfer of large tracts of land in the Lagash area at the beginning of Akkadian rule.³⁶ A similar dispatching of prisoners might have been shown on the Stele of the Vultures. The uncovered heads at the bottom of the preserved portion of the stele suggest nude prisoners rather than enemy soldiers in battle garb.³⁷

In conclusion, two questions may be posed about the nature of monuments and the nature of history. It is often asked who the audience for these and later monuments might have been. Did the monuments aid in the continued indoctrination of the elite, or did they address a wider audience? In the case of the Neo-Assyrian reliefs, we attempt to determine who might have had access to the various rooms in which the reliefs were found.³⁸ A. Westenholz imagines that in the third millennium the temple of Enlil at Nippur "must really have been a dazzling sight, gleaming with gold and copper and filled with works of art in the best Akkadian tradition."³⁹ During the temple's reconstruction under Naram-Sin, at least ten sculptors and perhaps three times that many inscription cutters were at work decorating it.⁴⁰ Who, then, could enter and admire its many splendors? In Egypt, multitudes thronged the outer precincts of temples on festivals, and it was precisely these outer precincts, as well as the outer walls of the temple complex, that were adorned with images of Pharaoh triumphant and other manifestations of royal ideology. The highly restricted inner chambers were decorated with illustrations of specific cult activities performed there.⁴¹ Of course, Mesopotamian temples are not sufficiently well-preserved to determine the program of decoration with such precision; for that reason, archaeologists and philologists need to collaborate to squeeze as much information as possible out of what evidence there is.

Finally, I shall return to history. Much of this discussion has focused on battle reports and scenes, as befits the modern scholar's preference for what is so often called "historical" as opposed to "ritual" content. Mesopotamian rulers commemorated two kinds of accomplishments: military victories and what Assyriologists dub religious or ritual activities, chiefly the building or rebuilding of temples but also the dedication of cult images and other paraphernalia, the selection and installation of high clergy, and the construction of canals. Mesopotamian inscriptions and year names reveal that the so-called religious activities were at least as important as were the military victories.⁴² Yet it is often lamented that so little is known about a given king's reign because his inscriptions and year dates lack any "historical" information. Ritual, of course, is not static; it has a diachronic dimension as complex as any battle, if more predictable. History is what the historian chooses to narrativize. When the ancients chose, they often described just those events that make moderns so impatient. No Mesopotamian battle account is anywhere near as detailed as Gudea's narrative of the rebuilding of the Eninnu temple in Girsu,⁴³ and no third-millennium battle scene was any more specific or less cliché-ridden than Ur-Nammu's depiction of the building of Nanna's temple at Ur.⁴⁴

Notes

1. J. Krecher and H.-P. Müller, "Vergangenheitsinteresse in Mesopotamien und Israel," *Saeculum* 26 (1975) 13–44; B. Hruška, "Das Verhältnis zur Vergangenheit im alten Mesopotamien," *AO* 47 (1979) 4–14; C. Wilcke, "Archäologie und Geschichtsbewusstsein," *Kolloquien zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Archäologie* 3 (1982) 31–52.
2. W. Hallo, "Sumerian Historiography," in H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld, eds., *History, Historiography, and Interpretation* (Jerusalem 1983) 9–20.
3. J. Cooper and W. Heimpel, "The Sumerian Sargon Legend," *JAOS* 103 (1983) 67–82; J. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore 1983); M. Green, *Eridu in Sumerian Literature* (Diss. Univ. of Chicago 1975) chap. 9; P. Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1989).
4. P. Michalowski, "Königsbriefe," *RLA* 6:51–59.
5. P. Michalowski, "History as Charter," *JAOS* 103 (1984) 237–48. See now C. Wilcke, "Die Sumerische Königsliste und erzählte Vergangenheit," in J. von Ungern-Sternberg and H. Reineau, eds., *Vergangenheit in mündlicher Überlieferung* (Stuttgart 1988) 113–40.
6. Michalowski (supra n. 3).
7. E. Sollberger and J.-R. Kupper, *Inscriptions royales sumériennes et akkadiennes* (Paris 1971); H. Steible, *Die altsumerischen Bau- und Weihinschriften*, Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 5 (Freiburg 1982); J. Cooper, *Sumerian and Akkadian Royal Inscriptions*, Vol. I, *Presargonic Inscriptions* (New Haven 1986); I. Kärki, *Die Königsinschriften der dritten Dynastie von Ur*, *Studia Orientalia* 58 (Helsinki 1986); J. Klein, *Three Shulgi Hymns* (Ramat Gan, Israel, 1981).
8. P. Michalowski, *The Royal Correspondence of Ur* (Diss. Yale Univ. 1976) letter 20:5–7.
9. Cooper (supra n. 3) 57.
10. Sollberger and Kupper (supra n. 7) 130.
11. What is meant is "a historical monument in the sense of a pictorial reminder of an important secular event"; H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement* (London 1951) 158. Thus, the Early Dynastic worshiper statues and figurines from Babylonia and Mari are not considered here, although I will treat certain monuments commemorating important religious, rather than secular, events (see the final paragraph of this paper).
12. P. Amiet, *Art of the Ancient Near East* (New York 1980) figs. 328–330 and 359–362; J. V. Canby, "A Monumental Puzzle: Reconstructing the Ur-Nammu Stela," *Expedition* 29, no. 1 (1988) 54–64.
13. Amiet (supra n. 12) pls. 49 and 68.
14. E. Carter and M. Stolper, *Elam: Surveys of Political History and Archaeology* (Berkeley 1984) 40; P. Amiet, *L'art d'Agadé au Musée du Louvre* (Paris 1976) 6.
15. H. Hirsch provides editions of the Old Babylonian copies of Sargonic inscriptions in "Die Inschriften der Könige von Akkade," *AfO* 20 (1963) 1–82; a forthcoming edition by B. Kienast will discuss more recently discovered material. Editions of copies of Ur III inscriptions are included in Kärki (supra n. 7). To these should be added the long Utu-ḫegal inscription, most probably also a copy of a stele inscription; P. Michalowski, *JCS* 36 (1984) 124.
16. W. Heimpel writes about the stone in "A First Step in the Diorite Question," *RAssyr* 76 (1982) 65–67; idem, "Das Untere Meer," *ZA* 77 (1987) 22–91, esp. 69–70.
17. E. Sollberger, "A Statue for Šū-Suen," *AnatSt* 33 (1983) 73.
18. A. H. Al-Fouadi, *Sumer* 32 (1976) 63–75.
19. Amiet (supra n. 14) no. 15 (Sb 48), the bottom third of a robed statue, on whose pedestal four bodies of defeated enemies are carved in low relief. M. Lambert, *RAssyr* 59 (1965) 177–82, for the names and titles inscribed on the bodies.
20. Kärki (supra n. 7) 114.
21. Remnants of the original inscription are visible in the area above the ruler's head. The well-preserved inscription on the stylized mountain above the imploring defeated enemy was added later by the Elamite king Shutruk-Nahunte, just as on the statue reproduced in fig. 6.
22. Hirsch (supra n. 15) Rimush b1.
23. Kärki (supra n. 7) 112–17. Note the shape of the stele in figs. 1 and 2; also Louvre AO Sb 2,

- illustrated in Amiet (supra n. 14) 76, no. 6a.
24. Hirsch (supra n. 15) Rimush b3–5.
 25. D. Edzard, "Die Einrichtung eines Tempels im alteren Babylonien. Philologische Aspekte," in *Le temple et le culte*, RAI XX, Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 37 (Leiden 1975) 161.
 26. In later Akkadian, *ešēru* or *naqāru* are used. Note the Old Babylonian copy (genuine?) of a bilingual Shulgi inscription, in which Akkadian *ašar uššaru* "where I sculpt" ("the sculpture on my stele") is the equivalent of the phonetic Sumerian *ki su-su-sa-mu*; Kärki (supra n. 7) 60.
 27. J. Klein, "On Writing Monumental Inscriptions in Ur III Scribal Curriculum," *RAssyr* 80 (1986) 1–7.
 28. I. Winter, "After the Battle Is Over: *The Stele of the Vultures* and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Art of the Ancient Near East," in H. Kessler and M. S. Simpson, eds., *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Studies in the History of Art 16 (Washington, D.C., 1985) 11–32.
 29. See the statement of the problem by P. Amiet, "The Mythological Repertory in Cylinder Seals of the Agade Period," in E. Porada, ed., *Ancient Art in Seals* (Princeton 1980) 35–53. Amiet's solution, which is to treat the images as types rather than specific scenes or individuals, evades the question, since the artists were certainly referring to specific scenes and individuals. (C. Robert in *Archäologische Hermeneutik* [Berlin 1919] 15, says that without textual knowledge, *all* classical imagery can look like type scenes, but in reality this is true only of genre scenes.) Unfortunately, there is very little textual material from the third millennium that could be used to interpret these scenes, and in any case, it is likely that the "textual" repertoire drawn upon by third-millennium artists was not at all the same repertoire circulating in written form in elite and scribal circles.
 30. The measuring rod and line are mentioned once as regalia of the goddess Inanna in the Sumerian composition *Inanna's Descent*.
 31. Strommenger, "Herrscher," *RLA* 4:347; Krecher, "Insignien," *RLA* 5:112.
 32. Cooper (supra n. 7) 35–36. For the stele, Amiet (supra n. 14) 76, no. 6a.
 33. A. Westenholz, *AfO* 23 (1970–71) 27–31.
 34. Amiet (supra n. 12) 375.
 35. We do have references to dead enemy strewn (as opposed to piled up) over the plain; J. Cooper, *Reconstructing History from Ancient Inscriptions: The Lagash-Umma Border Conflict*, Sources from the Ancient Near East, Vol. 2, no. 1 (Malibu 1983) 29. Also, the image of the king treading on the defeated ruler in a gesture of victory, as in the Naram-Sin stele (fig. 8), is found in the Utu-ḫegal inscription as well as in hymns of Shulgi. Curiously, the same posture, which occurs also on the Anubanini relief and later monuments, was portrayed on a relief of Shu-Sin of Ur at Nippur. Although the inscriptions on that lost relief did not mention treading on the defeated ruler, the Old Babylonian copiest mentions "(Shu-Sin) who is treading on the captured king Indasu"; Kärki (supra n. 7) 115, 117.
 36. B. Foster, "The Sargonic Victory Stela from Telloh," *Iraq* 47 (1985) 15–30.
 37. Contrary to Winter's interpretation (supra n. 28, p. 20), in which the bottom register would either be part of Eannatum's dream of a victorious battle or would represent earlier episodes in the Lagash-Umma conflict that are narrated at the stele's beginning. Winter reads this side of the stele from bottom to top. I would support a more conventional reading from top to bottom, with the battle scenes in the upper two registers separated from the dispatching of prisoners at the bottom by the third register, which shows the burial of enemy dead and celebration of the victory. Note that the spear, presumably wielded by a lost figure of the king, seems aimed at the eye of the largest bareheaded figure. At Pre-Sargonic Lagash, menial workers (slaves of sorts) were called *igi-nu-du*, "unseeing, blind." In an Ur III royal inscription about to be published by R. Kutscher, the victorious king claims to have blinded all male prisoners and put them to work in the gardens. Do we have an earlier illustration of that practice on the Stele of the Vultures?
 38. J. Reade, "Ideology and Propaganda in Assyrian Art," in M. Larsen, ed., *Power and Propaganda*

ganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires, Mesopotamia 7 (Copenhagen 1979) 329–43; I. Winter, “Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs,” *Studies in Visual Communication* 7 (1981) 2–38; J. Russell, “Bulls for the Palace and Order in the Empire: The Sculptural Program of Sennacherib’s Court VI at Nineveh,” *ArtB* 69 (1987) 519–39.

39. A. Westenholz, *Old Sumerian and Old Akkadian Texts in Philadelphia*, Vol. II, Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications 3 (Copenhagen 1987) 25. Compare Edzard’s description of the Eninnu in Girsu at the time of Gudea (supra n. 25).
40. Westenholz (supra n. 39) no. 11.
41. D. Arnold, *Wandrelief und Raumfunktion in ägyptischen Tempeln des neuen Reiches*, Münchner Ägyptologischen Studien 2 (Munich 1962); S. Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* (Ithaca 1973) 87–90.
42. This statement must be qualified. The impression of rulers’ concerns drawn from inscriptions may be distorted by circumstances of preservation that favor building inscriptions over other types. For example, the picture of Shulgi of Ur as a fierce warrior painted in a royal hymn (Shulgi D) is quite different from the quite pacific image of the same king reflected in his surviving inscriptions; Klein (supra n. 7) 50–123.
43. Gudea Cylinders A and B. For a recent translation, see Th. Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once . . . : Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven 1987) 386–444.
44. A. Becker, “Neusumerische Renaissance?” *BaM* 16 (1985) 229–316, esp. section 3.3, for a stimulating discussion of “historical” and “ritual” scenes in third millennium sculpture that reaches quite different conclusions than those reached here, as well as novel interpretations of the Stele of the Vultures and the Ur-Nammu Stele.

Early Mesopotamian Communicative Systems: Art, Literature, and Writing

Piotr Michalowski

ASSYRIOLOGY IS USUALLY VIEWED AS A FORM OF PHILOLOGY. BECAUSE philologists study written documents, a tradition has come about in which many of us reconstruct ancient societies solely on the basis of written texts, with only perfunctory nods to archaeology and art history. A majority of scholars, strongly influenced by this tradition, have considered ancient art and writing in completely different terms, as entities to be studied by people of different skill, training, sensitivity, and departmental loyalty. In recent years, however, some students of the ancient world have challenged this approach and have tried to integrate approaches to studying the ancient Near East. I would like to offer preliminary observations on some basic matters that grow out of the pursuit of such an integrated agenda. Briefly stated, I shall discuss certain issues that arise when we attempt to view artistic production, in the larger sense, in conjunction with communication. As background—and since I cannot avoid my own primary interests—I must devote much of this paper to the matter of writing.

Writing, as a technique, is so much a part of contemporary Western culture that it is almost impossible for us to imagine a society that not only has no writing, but does not even have the *concept* of writing. I would argue, moreover, that our deficiency of imagination lies at the heart of the current debate concerning the essence and the origin of writing.

Everyone who studies the cuneiform writing system is now firmly convinced that it originated in Southern Mesopotamia, that is, in ancient Sumer, perhaps, but not necessarily, in the city of Uruk.¹ The earliest direct antecedents from Sumer that are presently known were found in Uruk in the sacred temple district of Eanna.² For years it was thought that some earlier form of Mesopotamian writing was implied by these texts, for evolutionary models required that a purely pictographic system had to precede the highly stylized, often abstract conventional signs of the Uruk IV script. Pierre Amiet was the first to suggest that certain clay artifacts found in early sites in Western Asia were, in fact, numerical recording devices that constituted the forerunners of cuneiform writing.³ Amiet's hypothesis opened a completely new avenue of research. Over the last decade, Denise Schmandt-Besserat has published numerous articles attempting to analyze and seriate clay calculi or counters from the ninth through the fourth millennium B.C.⁴ Her primary work has centered on collecting observations on calculi from archaeological sites in areas ranging from

Jordan and Palestine to the Indus valley. She has argued that these tokens represented individual words and numerical notations and that they stand as direct antecedents to the Uruk IV writing system. Indeed, she has proposed a number of identifications between the shapes of and incisions on the tokens and the earliest cuneiform graphemes.

The results of Schmandt-Besserat's research have been widely publicized and have sparked a renewed interest in the origins of the cuneiform script. Her work has not been without its critics, however, and there are scholars who have remained skeptical about her claims. A. Le Brun and F. Vallat as well as S. Lieberman have independently questioned her schema and have raised serious doubts about certain aspects of Schmandt-Besserat's hypothesis.⁵ As matters now stand, three important objections can be offered. First, if one grants that the tokens all had the same communicative function, then one must note that they span an enormous geographical and chronological range, making it difficult to accept the claim that a uniform system would have been in use in diverse cultures from the Mediterranean Sea to Iran. Second, it is not at all certain that all the elements dubbed as tokens or calculi belonged to the same class of artifact.⁶ This is especially true of clay "tokens" that were perforated. The third matter is particularly delicate: many of the identifications between tokens and cuneiform graphemes are difficult to accept.

These are the obvious objections. It should also be kept in mind that many of the tokens were originally found by archaeological expeditions at the beginning of this century and, therefore, had to be re-excavated in museums, and there is little or no documentation as to their archaeological context. As a result of Schmandt-Besserat's work, more attention was focused on these matters, and field archaeologists began to pay closer attention to small clay artifacts. Interest developed in the clay bullae that had originally sparked Amiet's interest as well as in "numerical tablets," that is, flat clay tablets that only had numerical notations inscribed in them. Such tablets had been found in period IV Uruk and elsewhere, but interest in these objects grew when they were discovered at two Uruk period sites in Syria. The most important moment in this search came not from Sumer but from Susa, in Iran. The environs of the city of Susa were geographically an extension of Sumer, and cultural development in this area was often influenced by or related, in different degrees, to happenings in Sumer. At the end of the fourth millennium B.C., a new culture appeared in the Susiana, a culture that had obvious links not with Mesopotamia but with the Iranian highlands. Level 16 of the Acropole in Susa corresponds to the Banesh phase at such sites as Tepe Yahya and Tal-i Malyan.⁷ Here, for the first time in Iran, there appeared a recording system on clay tablets that registered more than just numbers. This writing, dubbed Proto-Elamite,⁸ is best attested in, but not limited to, the city of Susa, which has yielded over 14,000 such tablets. It has been found throughout Iran, at Tepe Sialk, Tal-i Ghazir, Tepe Yahya, Tal-i Malyan, and even as far east as Shahr-i Sokhta, if a single tablet can be used as evidence in our discussion.⁹ Although much progress has been made, this writing system has, to date, resisted attempts at a full decipherment; therefore, we have little idea as to the structure of the messages contained on the tablets, the relationship of these messages to linguistic codes, and, if one can even pose the question, what language was involved.¹⁰ This writing system was in use for a relatively short time, and there

is only one distant descendant that makes us think that perhaps the full picture is not available. The descendant in question, called in the past Proto-Elamite B but now usually referred to as Linear Elamite, is somewhat similar in appearance to Proto-Elamite and was undoubtedly used to render the Elamite language. Strangely enough, some of the texts that have survived in this script date from the time of the last king of the Awan dynasty, Puzur-Inshushinak. An Old Babylonian copy of an inscription of the Sumerian ruler Ur-Nammu provides us with a reference to this Iranian sovereign and thus allows us to date him to the beginning of the Third Dynasty of Ur, around 2100 B.C.¹¹ This is an interesting matter, for it suggests that while in Susa, Mesopotamian cuneiform was used from the time of the Sargonic dynasty, when it was even adapted for the purpose of expressing the Elamite language,¹² somewhere else in Iran there may have been a separate development of Linear Elamite that is unknown to us at present.

The relative chronological positioning of the Proto-Elamite tablets is not a simple matter, as Elizabeth Carter has written.

Typological comparisons with the lowland Mesopotamian sequence suggest that the Proto-Elamite period overlaps the Late Uruk through Early Dynastic I-II periods in the areas to the west of Elam. Absolute dates are still too scattered to allow more exact correlations between Sumer and Susiana, although it now appears possible that the Late Uruk of Mesopotamia is earlier than typologically similar developments observed to the east in Khuzistan.¹³

In a recent survey of Proto-Elamite civilization, Pierre Amiet has divided this culture into three phases.¹⁴ The first of these has been reconstructed on typological grounds and represents the period of "tablets that are later than the Uruk period," i.e., that were found in the destruction level that precedes Level 16 on the Acropole at Susa. The second phase, and the one that is represented by the true Proto-Elamite tablets, is, according to Amiet, contemporary with the Jemdet Nasr period in Mesopotamia and hence later than the early written tablets from Uruk. Another author, R. Dittmann, who has surveyed extensively the archaeology of the Proto-Elamite levels at Susa, is of the opinion that the tablets are roughly contemporary with Uruk III of Eanna.¹⁵ One must be careful in deducing definitive conclusions from such uncertain chronology, but there seems to be evidence that the first extant Proto-Elamite tablets are later than the first writing system of Mesopotamia, and moreover, that tablets with non-numerical symbols at Susa—that is, those in Proto-Elamite script—cannot be considered a direct development from numerical tablets. As Amiet has noted, the context of the first Proto-Elamite tablets, Level 16 of the Acropole of Susa, suggests that a new culture, eastern rather than western, had now taken over in this city. We are, therefore, not dealing with a developmental sequence at all. If we were to grant the hypothesis that tokens led to bullae, to numerical tablets, and finally to full writing, then at Susa, at least, the last stage of the process cannot be observed. All but the last step are observable within the context of Uruk culture in that city. The last step, Proto-Elamite writing, came from another area.

Thus, the sequence of bullae, numerical tablets, and, finally, Proto-Elamite writing at Susa requires a thorough re-examination of the original developmental hypothesis proposed by Schmandt-Besserat and others. As matters now stand, it would appear that this development did not directly lead to Uruk IV proto-cuneiform

or to the dead-end of Proto-Elamite writing.¹⁶

In view of these matters, we cannot maintain with confidence the hypothesis that tokens led to bullae, with tokens and bullae leading to numerical tablets. This is an attractive sequence but it remains, at present, unsubstantiated. Moreover, the final step in this development, from numerical tablets to proto-cuneiform writing, is the most problematical. For if the tokens served as the base of the proto-cuneiform system, as has been claimed, then why would that system be a direct descendant of the numerical tablets, which have no ideographic or logographic signs? Likewise, one could question the *development* from tokens to numerical tablets. The archaeological sequences at Susa, and to a lesser degree at Uruk, leave no doubt as to the temporal seriation of these types of artifacts. What is at question is the linear development of a technology. In addition to these questions, which can be posed on theoretical grounds, there is empirical evidence that requires us to look more closely at the token-to-writing sequence.

Not enough information about the archaeological context of the tokens is available, making it difficult to assume that all tokens had the same function, particularly the very early examples. Therefore, it is particularly important that during the recent excavations at an early Ubaid site, Abada, a total of ninety tokens were recovered from fifth-millennium deposits.¹⁷ Many of the tokens were found in a building that undoubtedly belonged to an important administrative unit; perhaps more significantly, some of these objects were recovered from child burials. This discovery must make us pause, and as a result, there must be reasonable doubt as to the accounting usage of at least some of the tokens. Some of these artifacts may have been used for accounting, albeit within different local systems, and others may have been toys or identification markers. Equally disquieting are the results of a recent study by Amiet of the contents of certain unopened bullae from Susa.¹⁸ The bullae were photographed in a laboratory using a variety of X-ray techniques, and the contents of these containers were compared with the impressions on the outer surface. On the basis of Schmandt-Besserat's hypotheses, the tokens inside a bulla should correspond to the markings on the outside. Lieberman already noted certain discrepancies in the extant data and proposed a simplified set of general correspondences that would account for the problems. The results of Amiet's study do not appear to confirm either interpretation. As a result of his re-examination of the material we may suggest that either the "code" has simply not been cracked or, and this is more probable, the bullae and tokens were used with a wide range of different mnemonic techniques by separate individuals within the same administrative system. In other words, there may be multiple codes at work here and, moreover, we shall never recover enough information to decipher them.

I have summarized briefly some current questions concerning the state of our knowledge on the origin of the cuneiform writing system, concentrating on the doubts that can be raised about the dominant hypothesis on this process. Succinctly put, we cannot accept without qualification the idea that a system of recording and accounting by means of clay tokens, reaching back into the ninth millennium, was the one and only precursor of the first writing system. We have seen that it is impossible at this stage to insist that all the clay tokens and calculi from prehistoric Western Asia represented the same, or even a similar, class of objects. Moreover, it

is difficult to state clearly that the next phase in the development, the use of tokens in clay bullae, demonstrates a systematic accounting practice. The earliest phases of this development require more analysis, for one may well ask what the function of a rudimentary form of notation would be in relatively small societies.¹⁹ Finally, there is no clear sequence at any archaeological site in which one can unequivocally demonstrate a development from the numerical tablets to tablets with signs.²⁰

The negative findings recounted above should not, however, discourage us from attempting to rethink the matter in a more positive vein. Without the results of Schmandt-Besserat's work we would have never come this far, and full credit must be given to her for the questions that she has raised and the research that her work has inspired. It may be useful, however, to pose the question of the origins of writing in a somewhat different manner. The evolutionary model that Schmandt-Besserat has proposed suggests a single track development in which a recording system for objects gradually evolved into writing. Whether such an evolution could be theoretically possible depends very much on how one defines writing and how one views the relationship between writing and language, or perhaps more specifically, between writing and speech. Therefore, before returning to the matter of the origins of the cuneiform script, I must digress briefly into other areas.

It is a cliché of contemporary studies on the subject to criticize the notion that writing represents speech. Under the powerful influence of Jacques Derrida, many have invoked selected opinions—quoting from Aristotle, de Saussure, and Bloomfield—in order to establish a bias in Western society, one that privileges speech as primary and denigrates writing to a secondary order of representation.²¹ From this follows the illusion, according to Derrida and others, that writing is simply a second-order representation of speech. Unfortunately, the reasons for this assumption are not as clear as Derrida would claim. It is easy to demonstrate that his choice of quotations in this matter is highly selective and that, contrary to him, writing and not speech has indeed been privileged by the dominant forces in society throughout Western history. As John Searle argued:

From the medieval development of Aristotle's logic through Leibniz's *Characteristica Universalis* through Frege and Russell and up to the present development of symbolic logic, it could be argued that exactly the reverse is the case; that by emphasizing logic and rationality, philosophers have tended to emphasize written language as the more perspicuous vehicle of logical relations.²²

Derrida's position on writing has been highly influential of late and many have claimed that writing was never really invented, for it has always existed under the guise of an archi-writing. But Derrida has often been misunderstood on this matter. He claims that writing is debased by an episteme that privileges the voice and suppresses the notion of a writing "avant la lettre." This does not mean, however, that a proto-system such as the posited token system represents such an archi-writing. For Derrida, writing is something else, and it is not bound to a technical form: writing is essentially a term for signification in general. Moreover, writing can have no origin because in his system origins as such are an illusion, a trace of something that already exists which in turn could only be a trace. This metaphor of Pierce's unlimited semiosis has little bearing on the subject under discussion here, but it may serve to draw attention to the fact that the relationship between writing

and language is indeed a problematical one. This relationship is usually posed in the context of the analysis of writing systems that have been in use for a long time. It is not necessarily true that an incipient writing system would have to serve the same function as a fully developed one. Internal systemic as well as social factors may have bearing on this matter; therefore, it may be more beneficial to assume that writing systems may relate to speech, and perhaps even to language, in various ways and that indeed this relationship may not have to remain static throughout the lifetime of a writing system.

With these ruminations in mind, let us now return to the subject of the origin of the cuneiform script. The evidence available at the present time points to the conclusion that the Uruk IV notation system was invented as a system in one moment, that it is indeed an invented technology.²³ In the past, developmental models demanded that one posit some earlier stage, be it a pure pictographic one or the token system. As J. S. Cooper has shown, there is no evidence that any of the world's major writing systems ever developed from a purely pictographic stage.²⁴ As we have seen above, the token hypothesis cannot presently be substantiated, although the recent revaluation of the early Uruk finds provides some support for the model presented by Schmandt-Besserat.²⁵ Perhaps an experimental stage prior to the one currently known will be unearthed by archaeologists, but I seriously doubt it. Claims have been made that two pictographic tablets found in Syria may represent such a stage; I, for one, think this is simply a local experiment.²⁶ Hence, for the time being, we must view the Uruk IV tablets as the earliest form of cuneiform.

These tablets may be the earliest form of the cuneiform symbolic system, but are they writing? This would, of course, depend on the definition. If we assume that writing is a technique for preserving speech, then early cuneiform cannot be called writing. As Jean Bottéro has observed, the earliest tablets, even as late as the Early Dynastic period, are no more than mnemonic aids. They do not transmit a complete message that could be transcribed back into a well-formed segment of speech.²⁷ Even the literary texts of the Fara period require additional information for decoding and do not directly represent full speech. As is well known, in the Fara texts, graphemes are not arranged in the order in which they were meant to be read.²⁸ Moreover, only minimal grammatical information is provided. Thus, a verb will have only the root and, most often, only one element of the prefix chain. This has sometimes led scholars to propose that other grammatical elements did not exist, but this is an untenable position. From certain textual variants in Fara period texts, we know that these other elements indeed existed in the Sumerian language represented in the script; they were simply not written.²⁹ It is clear that the school texts of literary content were taught together with an oral tradition and the written texts did not exist apart from that oral component. There can be little doubt that throughout the history of the cuneiform system this oral explanatory component was a crucial part of the instructional system. At the beginning, however, writing was much more dependent on oral knowledge than in later times.

We have jumped here to the Fara period and the first large group of written literary texts.³⁰ The Uruk IV period tablets, however, contain no elaborate prose or poetic messages and, moreover, we shall never find any. Such texts did not exist because the system was not designed to convey calques of linguistic messages. This

is writing as a form of communication, but it is not a representation of speech. Rudimentary syllabic elements enter the system in the expected manner, in order to notate foreign names, but on the whole the system is independent of speech. This is probably why it has been so difficult to establish the language that “underlies” the writing system.³¹ This matter is important, for it allows us to situate this new technique—cuneiform—within the larger set of human communicative devices.

Writing is always analyzed in relation to speech; hence, a hierarchical relationship is posited between the two. From the semiotic point of view, however, these are only two of the many systems by which humans, and indeed sometimes other primates, communicate. Facial expressions, body language, odor, and other sensual impressions are all part of a series of parallel systems of communication that cannot be ordered in any hierarchy nor related to one another. With the use of tools, mankind has found ways to devise semiotic systems, from Paleolithic counting notches and cave paintings to sign language and so-called picture writing. Some of these are what J. Lotman would call “secondary modeling systems,” that is, systems constructed in some ways—but only in some ways—on the model of language.³² It is clear that in the millennia preceding the Uruk IV script there were, in Western Asia, a variety of mnemonic devices and communicative techniques, some of them using similar notation. These systems must be seen not as developmental stages but as parallel semiotic codes. The use of stamp and later cylinder seals is well known. Potters’ marks were used as far back as the fifth millennium, and it is interesting that some of the preserved marks on vessels from Jordan superficially resemble some of the tokens and signs from the Uruk script.³³ It is highly improbable that potters’ marks from Jordan were direct antecedents of the Uruk tablets. Likewise, it is interesting to note that potters’ marks, ranging back to the fifth millennium, from Harappa, Tepe Yahya, and sites in the Susiana have similarities with Proto-Elamite signs.³⁴ Still, this does not mean these marks are the antecedents of that writing system.³⁵ It is clear, then, that multiple forms of communication and visual means of social control were prevalent in the Near East in the periods directly preceding and during the time of rapid urbanization. Different social contexts provided the impetus for differing vehicles. Seals, potters’ marks, painting and craft ornamentation, tokens, bullae, numerical tablets, and other designs—these must be seen as parallel systems of communication. The Uruk IV tablets must be placed beside them, not as an evolutionary descendant but as a new member of the extended family. The inventor(s) of proto-cuneiform undoubtedly drew upon many pre-existing elements to create the new vehicle.³⁶

The Uruk IV script was, then, a completely new communicative device that did not render language but was related to it in a distant way. The Uruk IV script is not totally independent of language, for the first vestiges of syllabification demonstrate that phonetic concerns do underlie the system to a certain extent.³⁷ That is to be expected, for there is no reason to completely separate sign systems from one another.³⁸ The common mistake, in my mind, has been to see early writing in relationship to spoken vernacular expression. Underlying much of the study of the Sumerian language, for example, is the question, “how was it pronounced?” There can be little doubt that most developed writing was read aloud, which does not mean that vernacular speech was involved. Already Mukarovský and his cohorts, in the

theses that heralded the foundation of the Prague Linguistic Circle, insisted on the "differentiation of linguistic functions and their modes of realization," and among these they took pains to posit a difference between *spoken standard speech* and *written speech*. As they noted, "Written speech strongly influences spoken standard speech."³⁹ Language exists in many forms in any speech community. In cultures with incipient literacy, there is a strong tendency to use foreign or highly stylized languages for written speech, a factor that further complicates the issue. One should note that there is strong evidence indicating that Southern Mesopotamia was a multiethnic and multilingual area very early in its history; there is little indication, except for personal names, that some form of Sumerian was the majority tongue.

One could argue that the development of a full syllabary in the cuneiform script resulted from two distinct needs: to write personal names of different linguistic origins and to apply the writing system to Semitic languages. Already contemporary with, or only slightly later than, the earliest narrative literary texts in Sumerian, a syllabary was in use that was applied to a language commonly called Eblaite. This language has been recovered from tablets found in Syria at Ebla and Mari, but there is a distinct possibility, as I have argued elsewhere, that this was not the local Syrian dialect, but a written Semitic koine that was developed elsewhere, possibly in Northern Mesopotamia.⁴⁰ It is important to note that this syllabary was in use at the same time as the schematic Sumerian system that was employed for literary texts.⁴¹ This difference is characteristic of the ways cuneiform was used throughout its history. It is, in fact, an efficient script, and the flexibility of the system was, together with other cultural factors, the reason for its success. A syllabary of approximately 120 signs was sufficient for letters and business transactions in Semitic Babylonian and Assyrian, and was also standard in Old Assyrian merchant accounts or Old Babylonian letters of the second millennium. Texts that had a highly repetitive technical vocabulary, such as omens or medical texts, were written in the first millennium in a system that was predominantly logographic, since a small set of signs, corresponding to the limited vocabulary needed in these texts, was sufficient and economical in use. The relationship between written signs and language, and even between various modes of language in the community, was different in each case. The early writing system was used primarily for economic texts, although from the beginning there existed lists of words that were used in scribal instruction. The need to express more complex narrative messages seems to have taken some time to develop. Indeed, over five or six hundred years elapsed before a syllabary was fully developed. At the same time, the rise of urban societies in the area took place only some two hundred years before the advent of the Uruk IV script.⁴²

Throughout most of its history, cuneiform was primarily used to express languages that were not the vernacular, since high dialects of spoken languages or foreign, even dead, tongues were the main vehicles of written communication. As a result, it is difficult to claim that Mesopotamia was a literate society and that literacy had an enormous effect on the cognitive abilities of the inhabitants of Sumer and Babylonia. Jack Goody and others have claimed such effects,⁴³ but, as B. V. Street has demonstrated, some of these assumptions are based on dubious analysis.⁴⁴ To begin with, rather than viewing literacy as an autonomous phenomenon, we must

analyze each case in its local social setting. In the ancient Near East, writing was restricted to a small group of males and schooling taught this group to use not only a new technique, writing, but also a new language, be it the written standard dialect of their own native tongue, or, as was often the case, a foreign standard literary language. Moreover, one must assume that some of these literary languages were adaptations of living tongues, but were never originally spoken by any speech community, much as Old Church Slavonic.⁴⁵ Slowly, writing expanded its influence into wider spheres of society, influencing legal and economic behavior. We are only beginning to trace this process but, not surprisingly, it appears to have been similar, to a degree, to the one described by M. T. Clanchy in his classic book on literacy and writing in Norman England.⁴⁶ Thus, the cognitive effects of writing are much more socially varied and complex than those posited by the “absolutists” such as Goody.

In this context, the fluidity between language and script, as posited above, is a combined function of the origins of the system and of social forces of the society that used the technique. The writing system began as one that was relatively autonomous from any one language, and then it came into an uneasy truce with a complex linguistic matrix in which multilingualism, dialect differentiation, and social stratification all played a role. Writing added to that kaleidoscope but did not dominate it. It is a mistake to argue that literature, philosophy, and history all came about as a result of the kind of limited literacy we are speaking of here. The last two decades have witnessed an unprecedented increase in studies on orality and literacy, but we are still left in the dark concerning the putative psychological and social differences of these modes of communication. The theories that posit a “great divide” between literate and nonliterate societies often underestimate the power of oral tradition and overestimate the influence of writing, simplifying the social context of language use.⁴⁷ Students of literacy often do not appreciate the richness of communication in nonliterate societies.⁴⁸ As one anthropologist expressed it:

Oral tradition is not simply the transfer of information. It also maintains an aesthetic quality in terms of speech usage, style of delivery, and the ability to use profound words and abstract concepts.⁴⁹

Writing does this as well. Of course, it would be difficult to underestimate the value of writing for the extension of human memory, although the ethnographic record is filled with examples of long, multi-generational records stored and recalled, unaided by any outside technology, in the brains of individual keepers of tradition.⁵⁰ Perhaps the one important difference in early written records, however, is accountability. By the time we first encounter writing in Mesopotamia, in Uruk IV, we are dealing with a complex bureaucratic society. Accountability required not only that records be kept in the memories of specialists, but be open to inspection by others. Accountability also necessitated the registration of personal names and this was probably the first impetus for the syllabic spelling of names, and thus for the first contacts between the script and the phonetic form of a language.

The consequences of such a view of writing and literacy are important for the analysis of verbal as well as visual art. Space forbids a discussion of the former; as far as the latter, I can only sketch some of the problems that I see in the analysis of the social role of Mesopotamian art, restricting myself to artistic representations

accompanied by writing. There are various forms of such expression, and the relationships between text and image vary. Thus, votive objects contain the names of donors for commemorative purposes, and apotropaic clay dogs bark. Most important for our purposes are monumental royal inscriptions. We know that at least as early as the Akkadian period there were elaborate stelae that had pictures accompanied by texts (J. S. Cooper's paper in this volume addresses these texts). I shall not dwell on the issue of the direct relationship between text and image; rather, I shall comment on some of the ways in which the Mesopotamians integrated various communicative modes.

A few examples must suffice. The "Code of Hammurabi" is a case in point. The only remaining complete exemplar of the monument is the famous Louvre stele from Babylon, which was discovered at Susa, where it had been taken in antiquity by a victorious Elamite king. As a result, we have no direct evidence for its original context. We know that the remains of at least three other stone copies of this text were discovered at Susa, and it is possible that they came from other cities in Babylonia. Moreover, J. J. Finkelstein has demonstrated that at least one similar stele stood in Nippur in Kassite times.⁵¹ One can safely postulate that late in his reign, Hammurabi (reigned 1792–1750 B.C.) had copies of the stele erected in the major cities under his rule as a visible token of his power.⁵² In this he followed earlier patterns, for there is evidence that monumental versions of law codes were set up by kings of Ur and Isin before him.⁵³ The stele is inscribed with the text of the so-called law code and the top contains a representation of Shamash, the god of justice, bestowing a ring and a rod, symbols of authority, upon the king Hammurabi.⁵⁴ There can be no doubt that this is a "presentation scene," an artistic convention that had a long tradition in Mesopotamia, and was used to symbolize power relationships.⁵⁵ Perhaps all the ancient "law code" monuments were erected in public places and were crowned by such a presentation scene; it is not unlikely that this tradition reaches back to the Ur III period to the "code" of Ur-Nammu. The scene recapitulates in a single moment the primary ideological message of the "codes": the concern for and the authority to dispense justice is a royal prerogative and it is divinely sanctioned. The relief, therefore, stands parallel to the force of writing. Just as inscribed stone stelae are the privilege of kings, so is justice. In this sense, there is an interesting parallel between this type of inscribed monument and the cylinder seals of high officials of the Ur III state. Irene Winter has demonstrated that there are three basic types of inscribed seals from that period with seated kings:

first, those marked by no inscription at all . . . , which tend to be of the poorest quality; second, those that include only the name of the individual whose seal it is, his title/profession and/or his patronymic and occasionally the profession of his father . . . ; and third, a group that includes not only the name and the history of the seal owner, but also a lengthy dedication citing the name and titles of the current ruler in whose service the individual functions.⁵⁶

The seals with long inscriptions all mention the person of the king and belong to officials from the highest echelons of the state bureaucracy: here text and image both refer to the ruler and there is a direct correlation between length of inscription and the importance of the owner of the seal.

Many other examples exist of inscriptions accompanied by artistic representations. Best known, perhaps, are the Kassite land grants, *kudurrū*, that were written on stone with elaborate ornamentation as were, possibly, Neo-Assyrian texts of the same type.⁵⁷ In each of these cases, inscriptions accompany representational reliefs. It would be an oversimplification, however, to assume that the texts portray the same image as the representation, albeit in a different medium. Different modes have different styles, and the messages they convey are not simply parallel. One could argue that it would be a mistake to analyze any of the components of the monuments separately. Even the choice of stone as a medium has ideological value. As Gregory Bateson once noted, “the lions in Trafalgar Square could have been eagles or bulldogs and still have carried the same (or similar) messages about empire and about the cultural premises of nineteenth-century England. And yet, how different might their message have been had they been made of wood!”⁵⁸

In Mesopotamia, writing on stone was largely a royal prerogative. The same word, *narua/narû*, was used to designate monumental stelae, small foundation tablets in stone, and fictitious royal autobiographies purporting to have been copied from stone monuments. In an Old Babylonian copy of a letter of petition from a disgraced royal officer to the Ur III king Shulgi, the writer boasts, “I am a scribe, I (can even) write stelae.”⁵⁹ Clearly this particular skill is to be associated with the service that Abaindasa can render the king, for monumental stone inscriptions are a privilege of royalty. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule, and they are quite telling. One may cite two Assyrian examples.⁶⁰

During the excavations at Assur, archaeologists discovered a group of stelae outside the main citadel, between the “archaic” and Middle Assyrian city walls.⁶¹ The majority, but not all, of these stones contained brief inscriptions identifying the officials and kings who were somehow represented by these stelae. The exact function of this double row of stones is not clear at present, but it is interesting, in this context, to note that although we have here a clear case of public monuments of high officials, they were set up together with royal stelae.⁶² Although the original order of the stones has been disturbed, it is evident that the stelae of commoners, albeit of the highest rank, could only be set up next to those of their kings. Likewise, relatively small votive inscriptions could be sponsored by commoners for their own well-being, but large private stone monuments were dedicated by individuals for the life of the ruling monarch. A good example of this is a unique pair of inscribed Kassite-period stone reliefs, dedicated to the goddess Inanna, from Uruk.⁶³ The matched mirror-image gypsum stelae must have adorned a gate in one of the temples in that city. They both bear a Sumerian inscription of an official of the Kassite king Nazimaruttash (reigned 1307–1282 B.C.). Although the text recalls Ur III and Old Babylonian royal inscriptions, it is dedicated to the well-being of the Kassite king.

More instructive is the phenomenon of monumental inscriptions of Assyrian provincial governors. These began with Nergal-Eresh and continued for a short period of time at the beginning of the eighth century B.C.⁶⁴ Most of these inscriptions were done in the name of the king; but at least two of them, Shamshi-ilu, the *turtānu* officer of Shalmaneser IV (reigned 782–773 B.C.) at Til Barsip, and Shamash-resh-usur, whose master is unknown, wrote in their own names.⁶⁵ It is clear that this type of inscription was allowed only in times of weakened central authority when local

governors began to appropriate, in various degrees, the attributes of royal power. But these exceptions only serve to underline the main point. Stone stelae represent royal authority, and it is the combined effect of writing, symbolic imagery, and the very medium itself that work together to express certain concepts.⁶⁶

What matters here is not so much a series of distinct images but a *system* of messages that was geared to a specific audience. Undoubtedly, the inscriptions on these monuments may have functioned to reinforce the allegiance of an elite bureaucracy that, for the most part, already had a vested interest in the preservation and dissemination of state propaganda. I would argue, moreover, that in a situation of highly restricted literacy, the very fact of royal writing contributed to the ideology of power. At least one Assyrian governor had a stele inscribed in both Akkadian cuneiform and the Aramaic language, written in the Aramaic script, thus visually demonstrating Assyrian claims to control of written communication in both languages.⁶⁷ It is also possible to view the Aramaic inscription as an expression of local loyalties by the governor who, although co-opted into the royal Assyrian bureaucracy, had to appeal to the local elite. Both interpretations are equally viable and are not mutually exclusive. A few centuries later, the Persian king Darius I (reigned 521–486 B.C.) went even further and had his Behistun rock monument inscribed not only in Aramaic but also in Elamite, Old Persian, and Babylonian, proclaiming the wide reach of his imperial control. It was thus a combination of medium, image, and writing that worked together, not a series of discrete units.

One could, of course, imagine a post-modern situation of a self-contained, self-referential series of images written and carved with no audience in mind. But the audience *was* there and is implied by the monuments themselves. The best example of this is found in the arrangement of inscribed reliefs in the throne room of Ashurnasirpal II (reigned 883–859 B.C.) in Nimrud. The arrangement of images and inscriptions in the palace has been analyzed, in brilliant fashion, by Irene Winter. Winter saw the slabs as a form of narrative and I would hardly quarrel with her insights; however, one point in her argument deserves to be discussed.⁶⁸ Following previous authors, Winter noted the standardization and repetition in the wall decorations of the palace at Nimrud. In order to explain this, she stated that “redundancy, necessary at all times to ensure reception, is particularly important as new modes of expression take time to be processed and become familiar to the audience.”⁶⁹ This may indeed be one aspect of the problem. I would like to add, however, that, as is often done, she imagined the rooms as empty, without people. Yet in order to understand the redundancy of the inscriptional and artistic imagery found on the reliefs, one has to do the opposite, for the redundancy is there to make the message clear in a noisy channel. The white noise, in this case, is in fact the audience, for it is they who make it impossible to view the whole room in a self-enclosed manner. Human beings get in the way, but they are the audience, and the redundancy of the information is a clear indication of the orientation of the message toward the reader.

I have tried to indicate here, in rudimentary fashion, some of the issues that must be investigated if we are to take seriously the integrative function of art, be it verbal or visual. I have tried to place art in the context of a new understanding of the autonomous origins and function of writing in Mesopotamia. Above, I noted that

seals, potters' marks, painting and craft ornamentation, tokens, bullae, numerical tablets, and other designs must be seen as parallel systems of communication; and the Uruk IV tablets must be placed beside them, not as an evolutionary descendant but as a new member of the extended family. I would now like to extend this notion and argue that the autonomous origins of writing allow us to pursue a more integrated concept of a system of communicative modes rather than a haphazard investigation of different ways of saying the same thing. One can see this early in the history of writing and its antecedents, in the first use of seal impressions on bullae and tablets. The seal designs and the impressed or sketched signs were used together to convey a complex message; one could not be read without the aid of the other.⁷⁰ The multiple sources of the new invention, writing, as well as the fact that the new communication device did not eclipse all other channels, led to the continued use of complex, integrated means of transmitting information.

Assyriologists have often treated inscribed tablets as autonomous objects; we now read them without any consideration of their ancient contexts. And yet most of them were decoded in antiquity together with other communication devices that are now absent: literary texts were undoubtedly read aloud, often in the context of ritual; private records and accounts were often kept by individuals who could not read them, but could interpret them as symbols of power. Thus inscribed illustrated objects such as cylinder seals, stone stelae, or reliefs were received differently by different levels of society: to those that could read they provided a "fuller" message, but the very act of reading reaffirmed the status of the readers as members of the controlling elite. Those who could react to the pictorial image and only recognize writing as a symbol of hierarchy and control were reminded of their own status within the system. The control of communication is, of course, one of the sources of power in society, and in situations of restricted literacy, such as in the ancient Near East, different modes of communication provided alternative modes of social control.⁷¹ The integrated study of both image and text, increasingly part of the agenda of Assyriologists and archaeologists alike, provides us with new possibilities for understanding social relationships and the matrix of power in the ancient world.

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Notes

1. C. B. F. Walker succinctly describes the cuneiform script in *Cuneiform* (London 1987). M. W. Green offers an extensive discussion of the earliest written tablets from Mesopotamia in "The Construction and Implementation of the Cuneiform Writing System," *Visible Language* 15 (1981) 345–72.
2. The chronology of the earliest texts is problematical. All the archaic texts from Uruk and other sites were found in secondary contexts such as trash heaps. H. J. Nissen addresses this in "The Development of Writing and Glyptic Art," in U. Finkbeiner and W. Röllig, eds., *Ĝamdat Nasr: Period or Regional Style?* (Wiesbaden 1986) 316–31.

3. P. Amiet, "Il y a 5000 ans, les Elamites inventaient l'écriture," *Archeologia* 12 (1966) 21–22; idem, *Glyptique susienne, des origines à l'époque des Perses achéménides* (Paris 1972) 69.
4. D. Schmandt-Besserat's major articles on the subject include: "An Archaic Recording System and the Origin of Writing," *SMS* 1 (1977) 1–32; "The Earliest Precursor to Writing," *Scientific American* 238 (1978) 50–59; "An Archaic Recording System in the Uruk-Jemdet Nasr Period," *AJA* 83 (1979) 19–48; "From Tokens to Tablets: A Re-Evaluation of the So-called 'Numerical Tablets,'" *Visible Language* 15 (1981) 321–44; "Tokens at Susa," *OA* 25 (1986) 93–125; "An Ancient Token System: The Precursor to Numerals and Writing," *Archaeology* 39 (1986) 32–39; "From Accounting to Written Language: The Role of Abstract Counting in the Invention of Writing," in B. A. Rafoth and D. L. Rubin, eds., *The Social Construction of Written Communication* (Norwood, Mass., 1988) 119–30; and "Tokens at Uruk," *BaM* 19 (1988) 1–175. One should note that M. A. Brandes was developing Amiet's hypothesis at roughly the same time, "Modelage et imprimerie aux débuts de l'écriture en Mésopotamie," *Akkadica* 18 (1980) 1–30.
5. A. Le Brun and F. Vallat, "L'origine de l'écriture à Suse," *CDAFI* 8 (1978) 11–59; S. J. Lieberman, "Of Clay Pebbles, Hollow Clay Balls, and Writing: A Sumerian View," *AJA* 84 (1980) 339–58.
6. Artifacts taken out of context are notoriously difficult to analyze. This is particularly true of small clay artifacts from early sites. Note, for example, the variety of such objects from ninth and eighth millennium contexts in Syria and Iran discussed by D. Schmandt-Besserat, "Clay Symbols for Data Storage in the VIII Millennium B.C.," *Studi di paleontologia in onore di Salvatore M. Puglisi* (Rome 1985) 149–54. It is difficult to maintain that all these objects and ornaments had the same social function.
7. W. M. Sumner, "Proto-Elamite Civilization in Fars," in Finkbeiner and Röllig, eds. (supra n. 2) 199–211.
8. W. C. Brice and E. Grumach, "Studies in the Structure of Some Ancient Scripts: The Writing System of the Proto-Elamite Account Tablets of Susa," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 45 (1962) 15–57; F. Vallat, "The Most Ancient Scripts of Iran: the Current Situation," *World Archaeology* 17 (1986) 335–47.
9. G. Tucci, ed., *La città bruciata del deserto salato* (Venice 1977) 83.
10. J. Friberg, *The Third Millennium Roots of Babylonian Mathematics*, Vol. I, *A Method for the Decipherment, through Mathematical and Methodological Analysis, of Proto-Sumerian and Proto-Elamite Semi-Pictographic Inscriptions* (Göteborg 1978) has made considerable progress in deciphering the numerical system used in Proto-Elamite tablets. If, as he hypothesizes, the Proto-Elamite tablets use the same system as the Uruk IV texts, this would be an important clue to the relationship between the two systems.
11. C. Wilcke, "Die Inschriftenfunde der 7. und 8. Kampagnen (1983 und 1984)," in B. Hrouda, ed., *Isin-Išān Baḥrīyāt III: Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen 1983–1984* (Munich 1987) 108–11.
12. See the still enigmatic treaty between Naram-Sin of Akkad and an Elamite king; W. Hinz, "Elams Vertrag mit Narām-Sîn von Akkade," *ZA* 58 (1967) 66–96.
13. E. Carter and M. W. Stolper, *Elam: Surveys of Political History and Archaeology* (Berkeley 1984) 115.
14. P. Amiet, *L'âge des échanges inter-iraniens, 3500–1700 avant J.-C.* (Paris 1986) 95–96.
15. R. Dittmann, "Susa in the Proto-Elamite Period" and "Seals, Sealings, and Tablets: Thoughts on the Changing Pattern of Administrative Control from the Late-Uruk to the Proto-Elamite Period at Susa," in Finkbeiner and Röllig, eds. (supra n. 2) 186 and 346–47.
16. The earliest tablets (Uruk IVa) are not written with impressed wedges but are drawn on the clay. As the shapes of the individual signs clearly anticipate the later cuneiform characters, I use the term "proto-cuneiform" (Proto-Keilschrift) following P. Damerow, R. Englund, and H. Nissen, "Zur rechnergestützten Bearbeitung der archaischen Texte aus Mesopotamien (ca. 3200–3000 v. Chr.)," *MDOG* 121, in press.
17. S. A. Jasim and J. Oates, "Early Tokens and Tablets in Mesopotamia: New Information from Tell Abada and Tell Brak," *World Archaeology* 17 (1986) 348–62.
18. Amiet (supra n. 14) 85.

19. That is not to say that small societies do not use such methods, but the question must still be posed. It is interesting to note that there are documented cases of the adoption of full writing in small, hunting-gathering groups; C. A. Ferguson, "Literacy in a Hunting-Gathering Society: The Case of the Diyari," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 43 (1987) 223–37. Notably, most of these cases resulted from Western missionary activity.
20. The best sequences thus far have been found at Susa (A. Le Brun and F. Vallat [supra n. 5] 11–59; idem, "Des chiffres et des signes sur l'argile," *Dossiers/Histoire et Archéologie* 138 [1989] 36–37) and Uruk (D. Schmandt-Besserat, "Tokens at Uruk," *BaM* 19 [1988] 1–175).
21. Primarily in J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore 1974).
22. J. Searle, "The Word Turned Upside Down," *New York Review of Books* (27 October 1983) 75.
23. The relationships among the three earliest writing systems, proto-cuneiform, Proto-Elamite, and Egyptian, are unclear. As far as Egyptian is concerned, according to J. Baines, "Literacy and Ancient Egyptian Society," *Man* 18 (1983) 575, "most probably the idea of writing was introduced indirectly by 'stimulus diffusion' from Mesopotamia." The discovery of Uruk materials at Buto in the Egyptian delta could be an indicator of the channels of this diffusion; T. von der Way, "Tell el-Fara in Buto—2. Bericht," *MDIK* 43 (1987) 242–57. D. Surenhagen addresses the spread of the "Uruk culture" and its influence in Syria in "The Dry-Farming Belt: The Uruk Period and Subsequent Developments," in H. Weiss, ed., *The Origins of Cities in Dry-Farming Syria and Mesopotamia in the Third Millennium B.C.* (Guilford, Conn., 1986) 7–43. None of this has any bearing on the Egyptian antecedents of hieroglyphic writing (clearly a local invention) but only on the stimulus for the technology.
24. J. S. Cooper, "Before Babel: Writing, Language, and Speech," forthcoming.
25. Schmandt-Besserat (supra n. 20) 1–175.
26. I. L. Finkel, "Inscriptions from Tell Braq 1984," *Iraq* 47 (1985) 187–88.
27. J. Bottéro, "De l'aide-mémoire à l'écriture," in *Mésopotamie. L'écriture, la raison, et les dieux* (Paris 1987) 89–112. I. M. Diakonoff presents an even more radical view of the mnemonic nature of early cuneiform in "Ancient Writing and Ancient Written Language: Pitfalls and Peculiarities in the Study of Sumerian," in S. J. Lieberman, ed., *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen* (Chicago 1976) 99–122.
28. In the Early Dynastic texts from Ebla and Mari, only slightly later than those from Fara, the order of signs for the most part is the order in which they were meant to be read.
29. M. Civil and R. D. Biggs, "Notes sur des textes sumériens archaïques," *RAssyr* 70 (1966) 3 n. 1.
30. The tablets from Fara (ancient Shuruppak) are most probably to be dated to the beginning of Early Dynastic IIIa, around 2600 B.C.; R. D. Biggs, *Inscriptions from Tell Abū Šalābīkh* (Chicago 1974) 26. There are, at present, only a handful of earlier literary texts, excluding lexical tablets; Biggs, 29.
31. None of the evidence invoked in the past in order to prove that the archaic Uruk texts were "written" in Sumerian has held up to scrutiny; R. K. Englund addressed this most recently in "Administrative Timekeeping in Ancient Mesopotamia," *JESHO* 31 (1988) 131–33.
32. J. Lotman, *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (Ann Arbor 1977) 9.
33. S. W. Helms, "A Note on Some Fourth Millennium Stamp Seal Impressions from Jordan," *Akkadica* 52 (1987) 29–31; idem, "A Note on EB IV 'Symbols' from Palestine/Transjordan," *Akkadica* 52 (1987) 32–34.
34. D. Potts, "The Potters' Marks of Tepe Yahya," *Paléorient* 7 (1981) 107–22; G. Dolfus and P. Engrevé, "Marques sur potteries dans la Susiane du Ve millénaire: réflexions et comparaisons," *Paléorient* 8 (1982) 107–15.
35. Dolfus and Engrevé (supra n. 34) 114.
36. Note, for example, that the symbol for the goddess Inanna was identical in proto-cuneiform on seal designs and in representative art; K. Szarzyńska, "Kult bogoni Inany w Uruk w okresie archaicznym," *Euhemer* 148 (1988) 6.
37. As M. W. Green aptly phrased it: "The incorporation of phonetic features into the system was related to the expanded use of logographic indicators like geographical or divine deter-

- minatives—silent signs which identified the semantic field of other phonetic signs"; "Archaic Uruk Cuneiform," *AJA* 90 (1986) 465.
38. Note that tokens were used alongside tablets in archaic Uruk. Some of them may be related to contemporary proto-cuneiform signs; K. Szarzyńska proposes some correlations in "Records of Garments and Cloths in Archaic Uruk/Warka," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 15 (1988) 220–30. Likewise, bullae were used during the period of Proto-Elamite writing, although at Malyan the bullae were solid, not hollow, and, thus, did not contain tokens; M. W. Stolper, "Proto-Elamite Tablets from Tall-i Malyan," *Kadmos* 24 (1985) 3.
 39. J. Mukarovský et al., "Theses Presented to the First Congress of Slavic Philologists, 1929," English translation in P. Steiner, ed., *The Prague School: Selected Writings, 1929–1946* (Austin 1982) 5–31; quoted passages are from pp. 11 and 14.
 40. P. Michalowski, "Language, Literature, and Writing at Ebla," in L. Cagni, ed., *Ebla 1975–1985. Dieci anni di studi linguistici e filologici* (Naples 1987) 165–76.
 41. There is a Semitic literary composition among the Abu Salabikh texts, already written in a syllabary adapted to a Semitic language, and some of the economic texts from that site may have to be interpreted as Semitic; Michalowski (supra n. 40) 173.
 42. H. J. Nissen, "The Emergence of Writing in the Ancient Near East," *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 10 (1985) 349–61.
 43. Elaborated progressively in J. Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge 1977), *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge 1986), and *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge 1987).
 44. B. V. Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge 1984).
 45. L. Matejka, "Church Slavonic as a National Language," in M. Halle et al., eds., *Semiosis: Semiotics and the History of Culture* (Ann Arbor 1984) 333.
 46. M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307* (Cambridge 1979).
 47. C. Frake, "Did Literacy Cause the Great Cognitive Divide?" *American Ethnologist* 10 (1983) 369–71.
 48. See the complex analysis of the "poetics of the voice" in nonliterate as well as incipient literate societies by P. Zumthor, *Introduction à la poésie orale* (Paris 1983) and *La lettre et la voix. De la "littérature médiévale"* (Paris 1987).
 49. A. A. Yengoyan, "Memory, Myth, and History: Traditional Agriculture and Structure in Mandaya Society," in K. L. Hutterer et al., eds., *Cultural Values and Human Ecology in Southeast Asia* (Ann Arbor 1985) 157.
 50. For Goody, moreover, the production of written lists decontextualizes words and allows for a critical attitude towards language. There is evidence, however, that such language use is not limited to literate societies; see K. H. Basso's review of J. Goody's *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* in *Language in Society* 9 (1980) 77–78.
 51. J. J. Finkelstein, "The Hammurapi Law Tablet BE XXXI 22," *RAssyr* 63 (1969) 11–27.
 52. J. Bottéro, "Le 'code' de Hammurabi," in (supra n. 27) 191–223.
 53. P. Michalowski and C. B. F. Walker, "A New Sumerian 'Law Code,'" *Studies Presented to Åke Sjöberg on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, in press.
 54. Already a stele of Ur-Nammu (reigned 2112–2095 B.C.) found at Ur contains a similar scene, wherein Nanna, the god of Ur, bestows the rod and ring upon the king. Th. Jacobsen discusses the rod and ring (or measuring cord and measuring rod) in "Pictures and Pictorial Language (The Burney Relief)," in M. Mindlin et al., eds., *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East* (London 1987) 4.
 55. I. J. Winter, "The King and the Cup: Iconography of the Royal Presentation Scene on Ur III Seals," in M. Kelly-Buccellati et al., eds., *Insight through Images: Studies in Honor of Edith Porada* (Malibu 1986) 265. The same author has defined this scene further in "Legitimation of Authority through Image and Legend: Seals Belonging to Officials in the Administrative Bureaucracy of the Ur III State," in M. Gibson and R. D. Biggs, eds., *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago 1987) 69–116.
 56. I. J. Winter (supra n. 55, 1987) 71.
 57. There may have been illustrated inscribed Neo-Assyrian royal land grants; S. Dalley, "An Assyrian Stela Fragment," *Iraq* 38 (1976) 107–11.

58. G. Bateson, "Grace, Style, and Information in Primitive Art," in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York 1972) 130.
59. dub-sar-me-en na-rú-a ab-sar-re-en: Letter of Abaindasa to Shulgi, ed. F. A. Ali, *Sumerian Letters: Two Collections from the Old Babylonian Schools* (Diss. Univ. of Pennsylvania 1964) 54, line 14.
60. Other exceptions are mostly not monumental, e.g., the Early Dynastic stone land sales that have both text and image; most recently, J. N. Postgate, "Cuneiform Catalysis: the First Information Revolution," *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 3 (1984) 10–11. One should also mention private inscribed votive statuettes, which begin in the Early Dynastic period; E. A. Braun-Holzinger, *Frühdynastische Beterstatuetten* (Berlin 1977). Other media were also used for inscriptions: J. S. Cooper, "Medium and Message: Inscribed Clay Cones and Vessels from Presargonic Sumer," *RAssyr* 79 (1985) 97–114.
61. These were published by W. Andrae, *Die Stelenreihen in Assur* (Leipzig 1913).
62. J. V. Canby provides various interpretations of these stelae in "The *Stelenreihen* at Assur, Tell Halaf, and Maššēbôt," *Iraq* 38 (1976) 113–28. The inscriptions and the layout of the objects were analyzed by C. Saporetti, "Some Considerations on the Stelae of Assur," *Assur* 1, no. 2 (1974) 1–12.
63. A. Falkenstein, "Die Kleinfunde," in H. Lenzen, *UVB* 12, no. 13 (1956) 42–45 and pl. 23b. Also, Y. M. Al-Khalesi, *The Court of the Palms: A Functional Interpretation of the Mari Palace* (Malibu 1978) 54–55, with previous bibliography. The figure represented is the female protective spirit *lamassu* often found at doorways. F. A. M. Wiggermann most recently wrote on this spirit in "The Staff of Ninšubura: Studies in Babylonian Demonology, II," *JEOL* 29 (1987) 26–27.
64. S. Page, "The Stela of Adad-Nirari III and Nergal-Ereš from Tell Rimah," *Iraq* 30 (1968) 150–51.
65. *Ibid.*, 151.
66. Such concepts differ from period to period and even from king to king. The case of the epigraphs on Neo-Assyrian royal palace reliefs is quite interesting. P. Gerardi discusses these texts and their generic development in "Epigraphs and Assyrian Palace Reliefs: The Development of the Epigraphic Text," *JCS* 40 (1988) 1–35.
67. A. Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil, and A. R. Millard, *La statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne* (Paris 1982).
68. I. J. Winter, "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs," *Studies in Visual Communication* 7 (1981) 2–38.
69. *Ibid.*, 19.
70. See the discussion of sealings and text on Late Uruk A bullae and numerical tablets by R. Dittmann (*supra* n. 15) 335.
71. J. Rappaport presents an important discussion of the political and social context of restricted literacy in "Mythic Images, Historical Thought, and Printed Text: The Paez and the Written Word," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 43 (1987) 43–61.

Animal Subjects of the Ancient Near Eastern Artist

Edith Porada

IN PREPARATION FOR THIS SYMPOSIUM, I ATTEMPTED TO GAIN SOME insight into the thoughts of artists who produced animal sculptures in the ancient Near East. I read extensively on the nature and habits of the animals, wild and domesticated, and on man's relation to them as a hunter and domesticator. I am especially interested in what the artists showed in their animal sculptures and why; in other words, what did they intend to express? This question requires close observation of details and a discussion of matters usually belonging to natural history rather than to the history of art.

The Sackler Gallery collection has several animal sculptures from the ancient Near East, including one of the Persian mountain goat *Capra aegagrus* (fig. 1). This animal is also called the bezoar goat, a name derived from the Persian *pād-zahr*, which means "counterpoison." The word "bezoar" was applied to the concretion found in the stomach of some ruminants and believed to be an antidote against poison. The wild goat was named for the bezoar stone because it was the best-known source.

Bezoar stones were a prized possession of rulers and other highly placed persons in the Middle Ages who imagined it was a safeguard against arsenic poisoning. Arsenic, mixed with wine or other drinks, was the most common poison at that time; bezoar stones were added to drinks because they were thought to leach poison from liquid. Such stones were used from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, though arsenic may have been used as an effective poison before the Middle Ages. Perhaps we should search for evidence of this in more ancient texts, as well as signs of belief in the efficacy of bezoar stones against such poisonings.

Most people today would consider this a superstition; however, investigators at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography in San Diego have published new information about arsenic in the environment.

True bezoar stones are calcareous concretions that develop in the alimentary tracts of the Persian mountain goat, but similar stones may be obtained from antelopes, goats, llamas, and other ruminant animals. . . . Bezoar stones may, in fact, remove both toxic forms of arsenic, arsenate and arsenite, from solutions in which they are immersed.¹

According to Andrew A. Bensen of Scripps, arsenite binds to sulfur in the protein of the partly digested animal hair in the stones. Consequently, he concluded "the hair



Figs. 1 and 2. Goat or ibex, copper or bronze with ivory inlay. Northwestern Iran, ca. 1000 B.C. Height 26 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, S87.0018.

can act as a chemical sponge for arsenite." Bensen discovered this by studying the effect of arsenic on marine plant life; he learned that algae and other plants in tropical waters absorb dissolved arsenite.

The bezoar goat sculpture in the Sackler Gallery is a hollow cast bronze, with a body supported by strong, not very long, legs. In another view (fig. 2), the animal seems about to move lightly and gracefully. Multiple lines marking the joints of the goat's limbs relate the sculpture to metalwork from the region south of the Caspian Sea; for example, the gold gazelle bowl in the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the gold bowl from Hasanlu, which I date between 1250 and 1000 B.C.² On the other hand, there seems to be some relation in the stylization of the animal's hooves with those of the animals on the horse's breastplate from Hasanlu published by Irene Winter,³ which she dated in the ninth century B.C. A date of about 1000 B.C. between the Hasanlu gold bowl and the breastplate may therefore be suggested for the Sackler goat.

The large eyes are an outstanding feature of the figure; they are pointed oval in shape and outlined by fine striation. Each oval inset is made of white stone, carved with a central circular hollow for a cornea of a different material. An arched eyebrow marked by a hatched line emphasizes the shape of the eye and creates a lively expression corresponding to the nature of the animal. A further aid to that expression is the upright slender ears, which suggest great mobility.

Of course, the most dramatic attribute of the bezoar goat was and is the shape and size of the horns—but that is actually the reaction of the hunter, about whom I will speak later. The horns of the wild animal are 80 to 130 cm and sometimes even 150 cm long in mature bucks, saber-shaped, and very strongly curved at the ends. Those of the females are much smaller. The yearly sutures are clearly marked in nature and

on this metal sculpture, as are the knots along the sharp front edges of the horns. The horns are laterally compressed in cross section so that the anterior edge forms a sharp keel for some distance above the base. This sharp keel differentiates the horns of the bezoar goat from those of the ibex, whose horns have a rounded front edge. The ibex horns also have regularly spaced knots, whereas those of the bezoar goat are irregularly spaced in nature, although they seem to be regularly spaced in the Sackler sculpture.⁴

In their article on prehistoric domestication of animals, C. A. Reed and Dexter Perkins describe how horns were used to fight, perhaps also to ward off predators, but primarily to gain social dominance.⁵

The loser of such a contest adopts a submissive role in the presence of male victors, and essentially is excluded from the breeding population. Near-perfect horns of a large size are thus a prerequisite for transmission of a male's genes into the next generation, and selection for such horns is thereby rigid. Under conditions of domestication, the natural structures of populations were disturbed artificially by selective killing . . . and natural selection for the wild type of horn was diminished, so that genes that allow the rounding of the medial and lateral angles of the horn cores accumulated.⁶

This description of the evolution of horn shapes explains why the horns of domestic goats differ from those of the wild by being smaller, rounder, and often twisted.

Fighting bucks rise on their hind legs and then beat their horns together from above, as implied in a cylinder design from Tchoga Zanbil, dated in the mid thirteenth century B.C. (fig. 3). The bucks also cross their horns and push with their foreheads, or they wrestle sideways with their horns hooked while standing parallel to each other. Rising onto hind legs for ritualized fights is also part of the threatening behavior of the alpine ibex. Ibex have been reintroduced to Austria and Switzerland in modern times, after having been exterminated in these countries in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance for their bezoar stones. In recent years they have been well

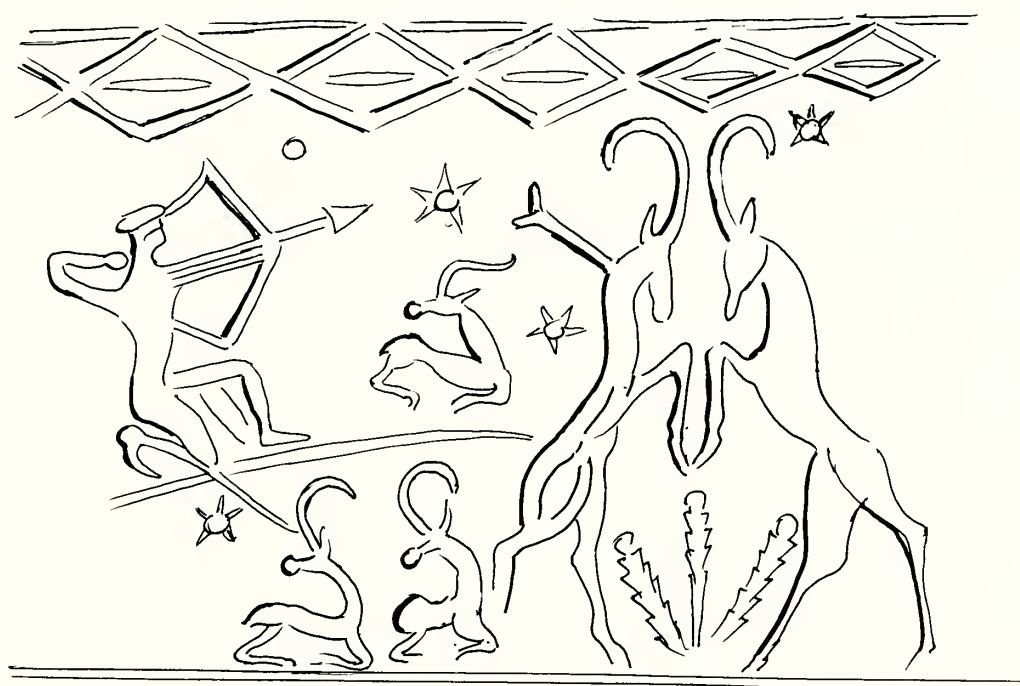


Fig. 3. Drawing of faience cylinder seal. Choga Zanbil, Middle Elamite, ca. 1250 B.C. Seal 43.4 x 14.5 mm. Redrawn from E. Porada, Tchoga Zanbil, Vol. IV, *La glyptique* (Paris 1970) 40, no. 36.



Fig. 4. Impression of chert cylinder seal. Middle Assyrian, ca. 1300–1200 B.C. Seal 32 x 14.5 mm. From E. Porada, *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections, Vol. I, The Pierpont Morgan Library (New York 1948) no. 600, pl. LXXXIV.*

observed.⁷ This has not been the case with the now almost extinct bezoar goats. We must therefore look to Middle Assyrian seal designs (fig. 4) to see these goats rise up on their hind legs when threatened.

All domestic goats descend from the bezoar goats. Domestication began in the ninth millennium B.C., as established by evidence from Period E at the site of Ganj Dareh, in the Kermanshah Valley between Behistun and Harsin in west-central Iran, excavated by P. E. L. Smith. There, Smith noted prints of hooves in the mudbricks. Brian Hesse, in an article on the origins of herding, writes that it is not possible to be sure whether the marks were made by sheep or goats; at the least, they strongly imply the presence of a few docile animals in the brick-drying yard.⁸

Because herding is so much more efficient than hunting, I suppose most people assume, as I did, that once people discovered how to care for groups of animals, herding would be rapidly accepted. Of course, it was accepted. However, modern hunting-gathering societies in Africa have shown considerable resistance to herding; using them as our model, we can imagine the resistance that might have existed in ancient Iran. R. B. Lee, cited by Hesse, wrote in 1979 about the African !Kung San.

There are real contradictions between the organization and ideology of farming and the organization and ideology of foraging. The most important of these is the contradiction between *sharing* or generalized reciprocity, which is central to the hunting and gathering way of life, and the *saving*, or husbandry of resources, which is equally central to the farming and herding way of life.⁹

Hesse develops Lee's argument further.

What is at issue are two sets of conflicting values. Foragers have little personal property and gain status through the exhibition of skill and the ability to redistribute resources. The source of prestige is not physical, in terms of products and carcasses, but behavioral, in terms of rights and acts. Therefore sharing is a virtue. Herders, on the other hand, count their status in terms of the animals they hold. Prestige is based on property, therefore saving is the appropriate ideology.¹⁰

Hesse also found differences in the organization of production. In foraging societies, cooperating tasks tend to roughly comprise the resident population. In

herding societies, the units are fragmented, often equivalent to family units who may be in competition “though within a hierarchically higher placed organization of cooperation.”¹¹ Hesse points out that pastoralism makes demands on mobility because the herd demands the attendance of the herder, who is not free to attend meetings and the like. After citing an instance in which herders did not want to part with some of their animals for slaughter for a feast to fulfill their social obligations, Hesse deduces “pastoralism impacts on the ability to form the usual social bonds.”¹²

In discussing the domestication of animals, Reed and Perkins state their views about the attitude of the human hunters toward wild animals as a psychological block to early domestication.

These hunters were adult males whose success in hunting marked their success in life; such hunters might respect and even revere some of the hunted animals, might indeed sacrifice to them and beg forgiveness after killing them, but kill them they did. The man of courage and skill who was successful in the hunt had stories told and songs sung about him, had a good chance of becoming a chief while living and perhaps a minor deity after his death, may well have acquired more women than did his fellows, and thus expanded his personal gene-pool in the next generation. Such a man earned the respect of all, was a model for emulation by young and lesser men, and so lived out his years in honor and pride. Such a man and others like him had been existing for hundreds of thousands of years, and the behavior of each generation strengthened the cultural pattern of the hunter as a hero. Men such as these would be stubbornly conservative and would not realize any possibility of other behavior, lacking the adulation, which might lead to the acquirement of meat; men such as these would have to be shown such other path by the force of circumstances not of their own choosing.¹³

This description of the hunter, though very vivid, presents the situation erroneously, I believe, as if there had been an organized vote to decide which way to go, to continue the hunting-gathering pattern or to opt for domestication and herding. It probably did not happen that way. Domestication became the way of life, but hunting has continued to the present day; in Europe, it is the prerogative of the elite. The excitement of the hunt is the main attraction—I have seen men shake with passion, unable to steady the guns with which they were to shoot their bucks. Moreover, the drama of the lonely juxtaposition of man and animal is felt to this day in difficult terrain and in the pursuit of an old and wise buck.

We may therefore regard the goat in the Sackler Gallery as the result of the continued appreciation of heroic huntsmanship. The fact that the artist rendered a male animal is indicated by the great horns as well as by the markings of black hair along the animal's back and in a line dividing the neck from the shoulder. These markings are indicated by ropelike lines in the bronze. Females and young animals generally lack these markings.

While preparing this article for publication, I have learned that a second goat, obviously forming a pair with the one in the Sackler, has just been acquired by Shelby White and Leon Levy. There will have to be some consideration given to the decorative object in which the two goats might have been used.

The Sackler goat, whose head is almost cocked to listen and who seems free to move if it so desires, may be juxtaposed with the bull also from the Sackler Gallery collection (figs. 5, 6), a bull weighed down by the load of an offering stand upon its



Figs. 5 and 6. Bull, copper or bronze with ivory inlay. Northwestern Iran, late third millennium B.C. Height 24.6 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, S87.0135.



Figs. 7 and 8. Mouflon, bronze. Northwestern Iran, ca. 1000 – 600 B.C. Height 33.6 cm. Walters Art Gallery 54.2328.

back. The bull seems a purposeful illustration of the animal domesticated by man to serve him.

Again, we take the domestication of cattle for granted, but Reed and Perkins asked why people would attempt to domesticate bovids, which are large, fast, and potentially dangerous animals, when the obvious products—meat and hides—were already available from domestic sheep, goats, and pigs.¹⁴ Their response is that the pattern of thought and action leading toward the domestication of cattle may have been initiated by religion.¹⁵

By the time the bull sculpture was made, however, the existence of domesticated cattle was taken for granted in the Near East. The cattle represented in Mesopotamian art closely resemble the extant portrayals of the ure-ox, *Bos primigenius*. Even the description of the extinct animal given by Grimek¹⁶—which is based both on finds of bones and on the so-called Augsburg ure-ox picture, painted on wood by an unknown artist in the sixteenth century A.D.—corresponds to the type of animal represented by the Sackler bull with the offering stand. The length of the animal could measure up to 3.10 m, the height 1.75 to 1.85 m, the weight up to a ton. The males were about one-fourth larger than the cows.

The animal had a light build with rather long legs. The frontal part of the body with its deep chest was more voluminous than the hind part. The southeastern breed of the animal had a small hump, a muscular neck, and either no dewlap or only a small one. The slender head was long and had a straight profile and large forehead. The horns were up to 80 cm long, pointed and sturdy, and the crosscut was circular. There are different forms of horns; most grow out to the sides, then turn up and forward, with the tips directed slightly inward. This is exactly the way in which I originally described the bull sculpture's horns, without knowing that this was the shape of the horns of *Bos primigenius*.

The short piece of metal projecting from the mouth of the bronze bull is probably what remains of an air vent.¹⁷ The hollow casting of these complicated figures seems to have been difficult and fraught with accidents. Here, the lower part of the right leg remains incomplete, holes remain in the stomach, and the tassel at the end of the tail is fused with the ledge under the bull's back foot.

On another stand of the same type in the Walters Art Gallery (figs. 7, 8), the animal supporting the stand has horns extending horizontally, probably indicating that a mouflon was intended. The head is far too small in proportion to the rest of the animal, probably also the result of an accident in the casting.

A third such stand, this in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 9), shows an ibex, probably a wild rather than a domestic animal. This may mean that the other two were also wild animals. Perhaps only wild animals were thought to be associated with the deities, for whose offerings the stands were intended.

The shape of the Metropolitan's ibex stand helps indicate the general date of these objects, because it resembles a stand (fig. 10) found with others at Khafaje and dated by Henri Frankfort to the Early Dynastic II period, before the middle of the third millennium B.C. However, I think that the subtle sculptural treatment of the Sackler bull indicates a somewhat later date, toward the end of the third millennium.

Although I imagine that these animals may not have been domestic ones, the concept of the domesticated animal serving man and gods is expressed by the very



Fig. 9. *Ibex on stand, arsenical copper with shell and lapis lazuli. Southern Mesopotamia, Early Dynastic III period. Height 40 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art 1974.190.*



Fig. 10. *Stand with male figure, copper. Temple Oval at Khafaje, Early Dynastic II period. Height 41 cm. Oriental Institute Museum A 9270.*

fact that the animals are carrying the offering stands. The character of an animal serving a higher power is fully expressed by the manner in which the artist set the tube supporting the ring for a vessel upon the back of the bull, giving that ring a size that dominates the figure of the bull. The ring is perhaps one-third larger than the bull's horns. Thus, it seems that the artist was very much aware of the concept of service to the god, which he had to express, just as much as the artist who fashioned the goat was able to create an animal sculpture that seems to partake of the heroic situation of the hunt. In this way, these sculptures tell us something about the relation of artist and animal in the ancient Near East.

Piotr Steinkeller, in an article of his on an inscription of king Ibbi-Sin of the Third Dynasty of Ur (reigned 2038–2004 B.C.),¹⁸ provides me with my closing note. Steinkeller writes that "according to this text, Ibbi-Sin commissioned a statue of the speckled 'dog' of Meluhha, which had been brought to him as a diplomatic gift from Marhaši. . . . Marhaši was a major political and economic power in the third millennium Western Asia, which controlled the eastern section of the Iranian plateau and acted as an intermediary between Mesopotamia and Elam in the west and Meluhha in the east."¹⁹

Steinkeller's reference shows that an animal sculpture was worthy to be sculpted by a royal artist. Thus, to explore the artist's world of thought in the ancient Near

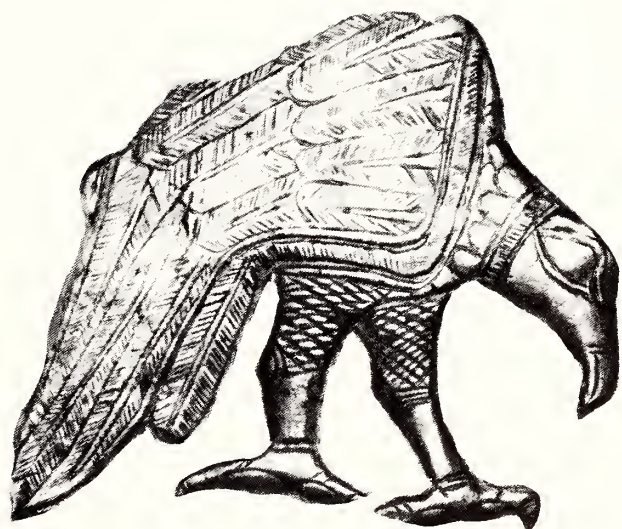
East, we should analyze sculptures of animals for their expression and treatment just as we do sculptures of human beings.

Notes

1. This information and the following quotes are based on an article by Thomas H. Maugh II in *Science* 203 (16 February 1979) 637. I owe the reference to Professor Barbara Low of the Department of Biochemistry of Columbia University.
2. The Metropolitan's gazelle bowl is discussed in W. Orthmann, *Der Alte Orient*, PropKunst 14 (Berlin 1975) 370, pl. XXXVII. Maude de Schauensee's revised drawings of scenes on the Hasanlu bowl were published by Irene J. Winter in *A Decorated Breastplate from Hasanlu, Iran* (Philadelphia 1980) 101, fig. 74.
3. Winter (supra n. 2). The drawing is inside the back cover.
4. I have consulted various sources for the description of the bezoar goat but have derived most of my information from I. L. Mason, "Wild Goats and Their Domestication," in C. Gall, ed., *Goat Production: Breeding and Management* (London and New York 1981) 35–55. I owe the reference to Dr. Erika Bleibtreu.
5. I obtained this and the following information from C. A. Reed and Dexter Perkins, "Prehistoric Domestication of Animals in Southwestern Asia," in Herrmann Schwabedissen, ed., *Die Anfänge des Neolithikums vom Orient bis Nordeuropa* (Cologne/Vienna 1984) 3–23. I owe this reference to R. S. Solecki.
6. Reed and Perkins (supra n. 5) 15.
7. See B. Grimek and B. Nievergelt, "How the Ibex Was Saved," in B. Grimek, ed., *Animal Life Encyclopedia* (New York 1972) 477ff.
8. Brian Hesse, "These Are Our Goats: The Origins of Herding in West Central Iran," in *Animals and Archaeology*, Vol. 3, *Early Herders and Their Flocks*, ed. J. Clutton-Brock and C. Grigson, BAR International Series 202 (Oxford 1984) 243–64. I owe the reference to Mary Littauer.
9. R. B. Lee, *The Kung San: Men, Women, and Work in a Foraging Society* (Cambridge 1979).
10. For further discussion on foragers, Hesse refers to his article, "Animal Domestication and Oscillating Climates," *Journal of Ethnobiology* 2, no. 1, 1–15, and to a book by T. Ingold, *Hunters, Pastoralists, and Ranchers* (Cambridge 1980); on the prestige that property holds for herders, Hesse cites R. Paine, "Animals as Capital: Comparisons Among Northern Nomadic Herders and Hunters," *Anthropological Quarterly* 44, no. 3, 157–72; the quote is from Hesse (supra n. 8) 244.
11. Hesse (supra n. 8) 244.
12. Hesse (supra n. 8) 245.
13. Reed and Perkins (supra n. 5) 10ff.
14. Reed and Perkins (supra n. 5) 17.
15. The first scholar to advance that theory was E. Issac, "On the Domestication of Cattle," *Science* 137 (1962) 195.
16. My reference is to the German edition: B. Grimek, *Tierleben* (Zurich 1968) 370.
17. This suggestion was made by W. Thomas Chase, head of conservation, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art.
18. Piotr Steinkeller, "The Question of Marhaši: A Contribution to the Historical Geography of Iran in the Third Millennium B.C.," *ZA* 72 (1982) 237–65, especially 253.
19. Steinkeller (supra n. 18) 263. Steinkeller also deduces that "since the Sumerian word ur 'dog' is a generic term for both canines and felines (cf. ur-bar-ra, 'wolf' and ur-mah, 'lion'), the animal most likely was a leopard" (supra n. 18) 253.

PART III

IDENTIFYING THE PROCESSES OF ARTISTIC PRODUCTION



Sumerian and Akkadian Names for Designs and Geometric Shapes

Anne D. Kilmer

MY INTEREST IN THE SUMERIAN AND AKKADIAN NAMES OF GEOMETRIC shapes and artistic design forms was prompted by updating the lists of mathematical coefficients (iqi.gub.ba) that I collected in 1960.¹ In 1976, at the Rencontre Assyriologique in Birmingham, I presented a paper on a figure that designates the concave square, the *apsammikku* (Sumerian, geštú.zà.mí). Now I would like to share some further observations concerning Akkadian and Sumerian terms. At the outset I would like to acknowledge the indebtedness of my observations to the detailed analyses of A. A. Vajman,² friendly communications with K. Vogel, and publications of E. M. Bruins³ and W. von Soden.⁴

Still in the process of collecting terms for geometric shapes and design forms, I have provisionally categorized them as follows:

1. General lexical terms used to describe objects employed in artistic design but not in mathematical texts, including:

<i>ajartu</i>	rosette (and other types of rosette: <i>girimmu</i> , <i>pirhu</i>)
<i>mû</i>	wavy lines
<i>tilimdû</i>	flowing vase
<i>buginnu</i>	watering bucket
<i>šamšatu</i>	sundisk ornament

2. Terms used in extispicy to describe marks and features on the exta, as collected and discussed by J. Nougayrol.⁵ Nougayrol's classifications are organized in the following way.

I. Marks likened to cuneiform signs. For example: an, bad, gam, kaskal, and kur.⁶

II. Marks likened to geometric shapes. These include eight out of possibly thirteen examples whose exact figures are known from geometry texts:

<i>apsammikku</i>	concave square
<i>dikšu</i>	pierced circle
<i>hasīs sammî</i>	meaning is uncertain ⁷
<i>makurru</i>	boat shape
<i>pūt alpi</i>	forehead of an ox
<i>gaštu</i>	bow shape
<i>tilpānu</i>	throw-stick
<i>uskaru</i>	crescent



Fig. 1. Face of monster Humbaba, terra-cotta. Sippar, Old Babylonian period. Height 7 cm. British Museum 116624.

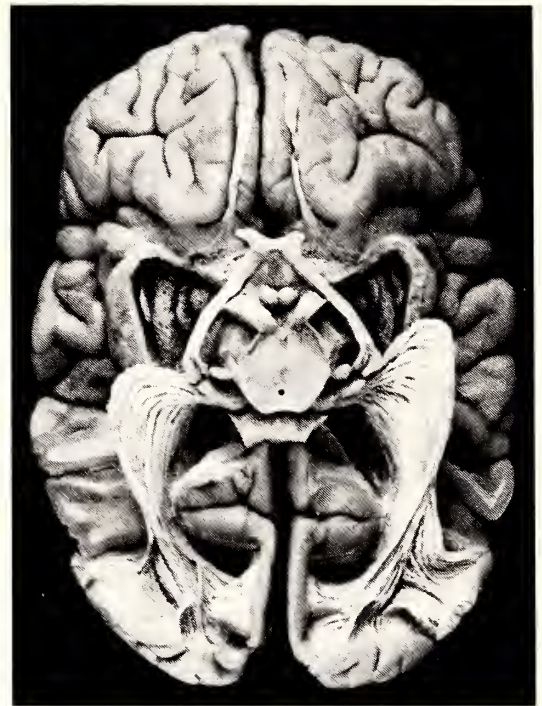


Fig. 2. Human brain. Photograph by N. Gluhbegovic and T. Williams, from *The Human Brain, A Photographic Guide* (New York 1980) 147, fig. 5-24.

III-XII. Marks drawn from the categories of topography, minerals, plants, animals, anatomy, food, artifacts, and familiar artistic motifs or scenes:

Lamma.gada.mah Guardian spirit in flounced dress

(*šalam*) *māhiṣ/nākis rīmi* (image of) slayer of wild bull

Of exceptional interest within these categories is the *pān Humbaba*, "face of the monster Humbaba," evidently referring to some sort of convoluted mass or growth on the observed organ. One terra-cotta face of Humbaba, dating to the Old Babylonian period (fig. 1), illustrates an omen derived from animal intestines; the omen is inscribed on the reverse of the face-"tablet." Compare this face with a photograph of the human brain dissected from the lower aspect (fig. 2); the similarity of patterning and "features" is startling.

Miscellaneous, related terms, whose translation is in doubt, include:

<i>nūru</i>	bright spot
<i>šarūru</i>	unraveling ⁸
<i>depû</i>	perforation

3. Following the categories of terms describing objects used in artistic design and terms describing marks and features on the exta, the third grouping consists of terms used for specific geometric constructions, as attested in the Old Babylonian illustrated tablets (figs. 3, 4) and elsewhere among mathematical problem texts (often preceded by *gán*, "plane").⁹ This category is divided into several groups.

a) *i.* Terms based upon known realia. With the possible exception of the



Figs. 3 and 4. Geometry tablet (obverse and reverse), clay. Old Babylonian period. Height 32 cm. British Museum 15285.

composite bow shape, all of these can be found in the decoration of extant works of art (fig. 5).

gán.giš.ban	<i>qaštu</i>	composite bow shape
gán.ban.ak	<i>eqel panakki</i>	extended bow shape
gán.giš.šub ¹⁰	<i>tilpānu</i>	(double) throw-stick, rhombus
(gán.) má.gur ₈	<i>makurru</i>	(cargo) boat shape, a biconvex figure constructed from 90° arcs
giš.ù.šub	<i>nalbattu</i>	brick mold, a truncated square pyramid (and the name of a gold ornament)

ii. Terms based upon realia, but with no specific construction, illustration, or dimensions available:

gán.sa.li	<i>eqel pagî</i>	unknown figure based on the <i>pagû</i> -musical instrument
	<i>rātu</i>	closed pipe/duct
	<i>ruqqu</i>	kettle/hemisphere
še		unknown figure from Susa igigub list, constructed from 90° arcs ¹¹

b) Abstract terms that refer to a known construction. All of these can also be found in artistic decoration.

	<i>dikšu (dakištu)</i>	dented circle, a circle inscribed within a circle ¹²
	<i>dikištu</i>	dented square, a square inscribed within a square ¹³
gúr	<i>kippatu</i>	circumference, circle (also written ka.kēš)

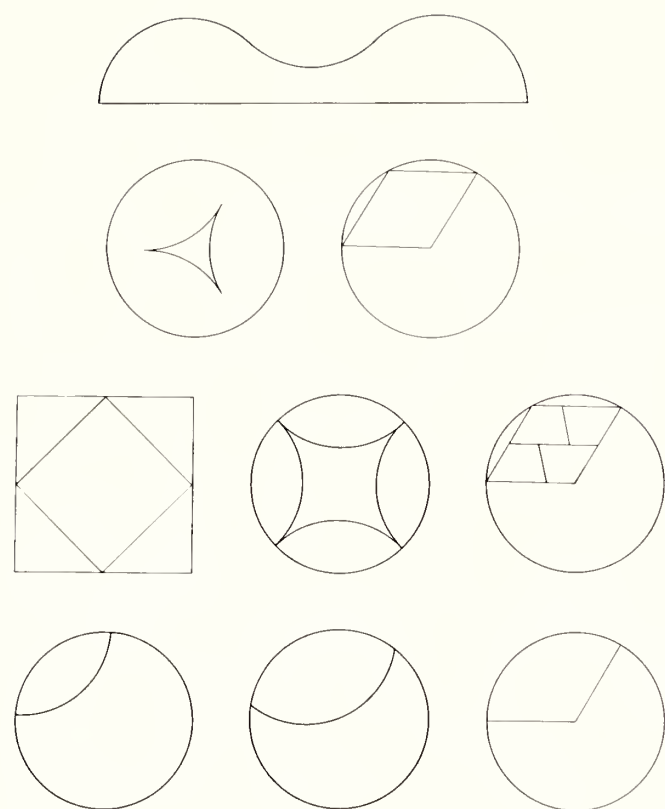


Fig. 5. Figures reconstructed from geometry texts. Row 1: composite bow shape; Row 2: concave triangle, rhombus (double throw-stick); Row 3: šár figure (?), concave square with four boat shapes, four trapezoids inside a rhombus; Row 4: boat shape, ox eye, extended (flexed) bow shape. Drawing by Jane Becker.

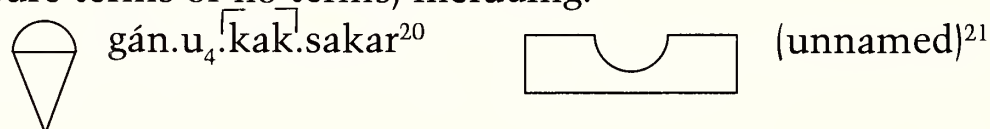
íb.sá	<i>mithartu</i>	square (also written lagab)
sag.dù	<i>santakku</i>	triangle (in general) ¹⁴
sag.5/6/7		polygons
u ₄ .sakar	<i>uskaru</i>	crescent (moon), semi-circular line, half wheel
uš u sag		length and width, rectangle ¹⁵

c) Terms for specific geometric constructions that are based on highly stylized art forms and artifacts related to bovine faces and bovine lyres:

gán.giš.zà.mí	<i>eqel sammîn</i>	plane of the lyre (?) ¹⁶
gestú.zà.mí	<i>apsammikku</i> ¹⁷	concave square constructed from 90° arcs ¹⁸
	cf. <i>apsamikku ša 3</i>	concave equilateral triangle constructed from 60° arcs
igi.gud	<i>īn alpim</i>	bovine eye, a biconvex figure constructed from 120° arcs
sag.ki.gud	<i>pūt alpim</i>	bovine forehead/face (from nose up), a trapezoid

d) Terms for specific constructions related to cuneiform signs. A. Vajman has suggested that the term šár in the Susa igigub list may represent a square inscribed in a square (fig. 5, Row 3, left) as depicted in the Old Babylonian geometry text.¹⁹

4. A fourth category consists of specific geometric constructions for which we have obscure terms or no terms, including:



5. Finally, I mention the many design forms for which we have no names, including the sometimes elegant drawings on the reverse of cuneiform tablets from Abu Salabikh and Fara dating to the third millennium.²²

It is evident that every shape had a name. But if we seek to determine how and when this terminology developed, we must also inquire into the evolution of simple geometry.

Geometric designs for painted pottery, for example, were popular from very early times, reaching a height in the late Halaf period where, following the discussion of E. Douglas van Buren²³ and others, geometric forms became more and more precise and dominated artistic designs. B. Goff even states that "the geometric form seems to have been of primary concern."²⁴ An example of this is a Halaf ware bowl decorated with a somewhat crudely executed concave square figure (fig. 6). Other pieces of Halaf period painted pottery are also decorated with geometric forms, including a perfectly executed pentagon inscribed in a ten-sided figure within a circle.

By the Jemdet Nasr period, geometric design elements must have required even greater precision of execution in order to make stone inlays in decorated items such as vases, amulets, animal sculptures, and wall ornaments. Pavement from the site of Balakot, northwest of Karachi on the ancient Arabian seacoast, is designed with the boat shape *makurru* and the concave square *apsammikku* (fig. 7). Dating to the period of mature Harappan style, this pavement testifies to the widespread popularity of these particular geometric designs.

It should be no surprise that simple geometry developed in direct response to the increasing need for a measuring system for the accurate production of art forms. By the Early Dynastic period—although animal, human, and plant designs may have overshadowed geometric designs—geometry might have influenced sculpture more than we have thought.

I suggest that the technical terms for geometrical constructions appearing in Old Babylonian mathematical texts must have been formulated or standardized at least

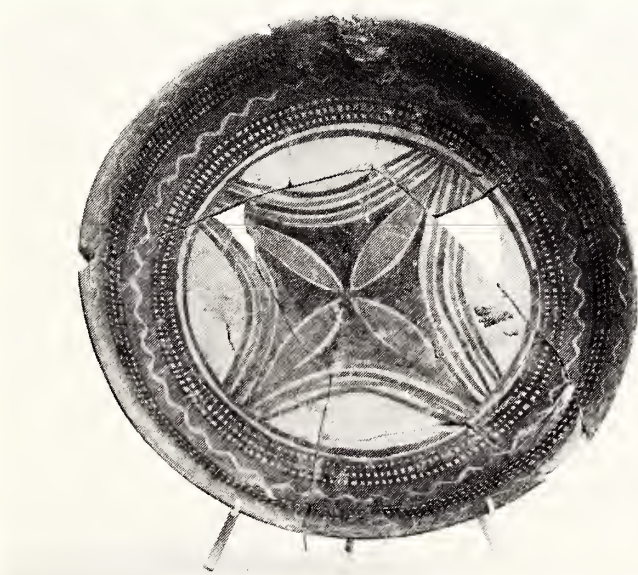


Fig. 6. Painted bowl, ceramic. Arpachiyeh, Halaf period. Diameter 14 cm. British Museum 127585.



Fig. 7. Decorated pavement. Balakot, Pakistan, mature Harappan style (2500–1800 B.C.). Courtesy G. F. Dales.

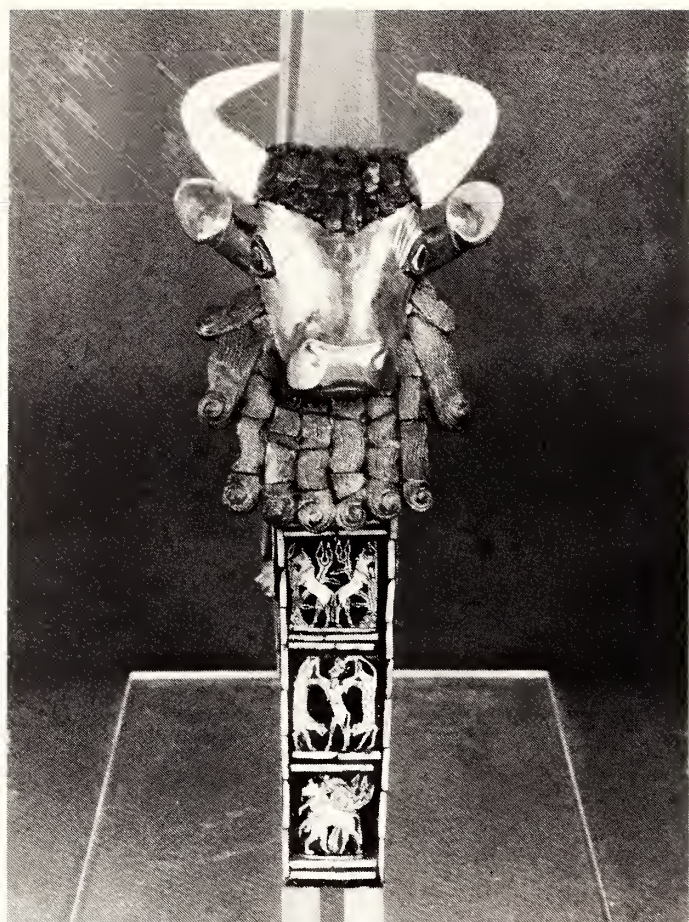


Fig. 8. Front of a lyre, bull's head of gold sheet over wooden core, with lapis lazuli and silver. Ur, Early Dynastic III period. Height 45 cm. British Museum 121198.



Fig. 9. Front of a lyre, bovine head, silver. Ur, Early Dynastic III period. Height of head 6.5 cm. British Museum 121199.

as far back as the Early Dynastic period.²⁵ This seems especially true for terms concerned with bovine heads, including those sculpted on lyres, inasmuch as bovine lyres fell completely out of use around 2000 B.C.²⁶ We have several examples of canonically rendered bovine heads on lyres and on stone sculptures from Early Dynastic Sumer. In fact, the nose of these bovines is stylistically rendered in a form that closely approximates a concave square or *apsammikku* (figs. 8, 9). Furthermore, the bovine eye is very nearly a biconvex figure constructed from 120° arcs (the figure *in alpim*). As to the "forehead of the ox" (the figure *pūt alpim*), the inlays in bovine heads seem to be triangles, although a sculpture of a goat or gazelle head from Fara does have a trapezoid inlay on the forehead. Perhaps the geometric term "forehead of the ox" refers to a schematic of the upper face or forehead of a bovine.

I have used the word "canonical" because the stylization of such things as bovine facial features is, after all, in the eye of the beholder and in the hand of the artist. Contrast an actual bovine (fig. 10) with two different ancient Near Eastern renderings (figs. 11, 12).

A. Vajman makes the distinction between *associative* names like "lyre-shape" and *descriptive* names like *sag.5*, which translates as "five-sided (polygon)." Much of the *associative* Akkadian geometrical terminology could not have been "invented" in the Old Babylonian period and must hark back to an ancient repertory of terms. Therefore, geometry must have originally been developed by the artisans who



Fig. 10. Head of a cow. Division of Agriculture, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.



Above: Fig. 11. Kneeling bull holding vessel, silver. Southwestern Iran, Proto-Elamite period. Height 16.3 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art 66.173.



Left: Fig. 12. Bull's head attachment for cauldron, bronze. Van, Urartu, ca. 900 B.C. Height 17 cm. British Museum 91242.

produced the designs, rather than by “abstract thinkers” who pondered mathematical and geometrical principles.

On the basis of a philological examination of ancient Mesopotamian technical terminology for geometry and design forms, I conclude that the time-frame for the development or standardization of this terminology is likely to have been the early third millennium. I see that others, notably M. Powell²⁷ and J. Friberg,²⁸ whose grand summations I have reviewed, reach the same conclusions on the basis of the antiquity of the sexagesimal system and the various mathematical processes tied to

practical problems of computation and metrology. After completing this paper, I discovered that K. Vogel has also concluded that

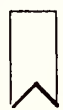
schon in der Zeit vor der Drehung der Schriftrichtung die quadratische Gleichung bekannt war und man darf wohl den Sumerern . . . die entscheidende Rolle bei der Entwicklung der Babylonischen Mathematik zubilligen.²⁹

At the least, I seem to be in good company.


Finally, I hope that art historians will explore the likelihood that the art and sculpture of the Early Dynastic period in Ur and elsewhere followed artistic canons that were closely related to the simple geometric knowledge of the day.

The substance of this paper was presented in July 1984 in Leningrad at the Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale.

Notes

1. A. D. Kilmer, "Two New Lists of Key Numbers for Mathematical Operations," *Orientalia* 29 (1960) 273–308.
2. A. A. Vajman's articles include: "O Geometricheskoi Figure absamikku Klinopisnich Matematičeskich Tekstov," *VDI* 67 (1959) 91–99; "In alpm, tallum i pirkum v Klinopisnich Matematičeskich Tekstach," *Devnii Mir* (Struve Volume, Moscow 1962) 214–17; and "Istolkovanie Geometričeskich Postoyannich iz Suzkogo Klinopisnogo Spiska I (suzi)," *VDI* 83 (1963) 75–86.
3. E. M. Bruins, *Nouvelles découvertes sur les mathématiques babyloniennes* (Paris 1951) 19ff.
4. W. von Soden, review of *Textes mathématiques de Suse*, by E. M. Bruins and M. Rutten, *Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique en Iran* 21 (1964) 44–50.
5. J. Nougayrol, "Les 'silhouettes de référence' de l'haruspicine," *AOAT* (1976, Kramer Anniversary Volume) 343–50.
6. Here also may belong the sign "u," representing the shape of the *hasīsu*, "aperture of the ear."
7. Add to Nougayrol's examples of this term (no. 51) his item no. 54 *hazīgat sammī* "'bonnet' d'une lyre" (supra n. 5, p. 345), for which a corrected reading *ha-si-is! sa-am-mi-im* is preferable; *RAssyr* 63 (1969) 154, line 6.
8. Translations follow the *CAD* (Chicago 1956–) and W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden 1959–).
9. H. W. F. Saggs, "A Babylonian Geometrical Text," *RAssyr* 54 (1960) 131–46; Vajman (supra n. 2, 1963) 75ff. and passim.
10. Vajman (supra n. 2, 1963) 79, with n. 9, incorrectly reads *gān.giš.má*.
11. E. M. Bruins and M. Rutten, *Textes mathématiques de Suse* (Paris 1961) 26, 11.16–18. Vajman (supra n. 2, 1963) 80, identifies the term with the *makurru* figure. Compare the obscure *še ubānāti*, as discussed by R. Labat, *Traité akkadien de diagnostics et prognostics médicaux* (Paris 1951) 98, line 54, perhaps referring to something curved.
12. See A. D. Kilmer, "The Use of Akkadian *DKŠ* in Old Babylonian Geometry Texts," in *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim* (Chicago 1964) 140–46.
13. *Ibid.*
14. One would expect different names for isosceles, equilateral, and right triangles, but these do not occur.
15. The same pair of terms is used to formulate quadratic equations, as discussed by K. Vogel, "Ist die babylonische Mathematik sumerisch oder akkadisch?" *Mathematische Nachrichten* 18 (1958) 380f.
16. Collation of the figure given in the Old Babylonian illustrated geometry text BM 15285 (Saggs, supra n. 9) yielded a partially effaced unclear outline for "j." Perhaps to be connected with , an ominous mark called *gaba-ra-ah-hu šá* 15, explained as *giš. tukul 15 gim*

umbin. udu.nitá “weapon-of-the-right (-mark) like a ram’s hoof,” and further as *e-de-ip-ti* (meaning uncertain, perhaps “cloven” as a guess—a parallel offers DAR-*iq* “is cleft”). J. Nougayrol, “Deux figures oubliées,” *RAssyr* 68 (1974) 63 and 67.

17. The logogram áb.zà.mí for *apsammikku* occurs only in omen literature and not in mathematical texts, while the phonetically written *hasīs sammîm* (an Akkadian rendering of geštu.zà.mí) is not found in the mathematical texts. For arguments in favor of Akkadian *sammû* as “harp” rather than “lyre,” see B. Lawergren and O. R. Gurney, “Sound Holes and Geometric Figures, Clues to the Terminology of Ancient Mesopotamian Harps,” *Iraq* 49 (1987) 37–52.
18. A. Spycket, “‘Louez-le sur la harpe et la lyre,’” *AnatSt* 33 (1983) 46f., prefers to separate the geštu.zà.mí “concave square” from the *apsammikku*, which she sees as a lyre-shaped trapezoid, even though the coefficients of both the logogram geštu.zà.mí and the *apsammikku* are identical and relate to the concave square (cf. Vajman, *supra* n. 2, 1963, p. 81). Correct the label to her fig. 13 on p. 47; the construction is based rather on the Susa text (*supra* n. 11) 108–11, text no. 21. There Bruins, p. 111, concluded on the basis of this text that the *apsammikku* figure was uncertain. For the most recent mathematical explanation of the coefficient 16, 40 for this figure, see B. Lawergren and O. R. Gurney (*supra* n. 17) 52.
19. Vajman (*supra* n. 2, 1963) 84; Saggs (*supra* n. 9) 137f., Text E.
20. Saggs (*supra* n. 9) 140, Text K. Perhaps to be understood as “semi-circle (u₄.sakar = uskaru)-with-nail(kak)/triangle (dù).”
21. Saggs (*supra* n. 9) 145.
22. R. Biggs, *Inscriptions from Tell Abū Šalābīkh*, OIP 99 (Chicago 1974) 30f.; e.g. 
23. E. Douglas van Buren, “Geometrisches Ornament,” *RLA* 3, no. 3 (1964) 206–9.
24. B. Goff, *Symbols of Prehistoric Mesopotamia* (New Haven 1963) 13. D. Collon writes on the popularity of geometric design on seals in the Halaf and Jemdet Nasr periods in *First Impressions: Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago 1987) 20–23. Colin Smith has kindly referred me to the comprehensive discussion of early design forms in glyptic art by D. Homès-Fredericq, “Cachets protohistoriques mésopotamiens et susiens,” *IrAnt* 3 (1963) 85–101.
25. C. Redman, *The Rise of Civilization* (San Francisco 1978) 294, for general remarks on standardization in the Early Dynastic period.
26. D. Collon, “Leier. B. Archäologisch,” *RLA* 4, no. 7 (1983) 581.
27. M. Powell, “The Antecedents of Old Babylonian Place Notation and the Early History of Babylonian Mathematics,” *Historia Mathematica* 3 (1976) 417–39; *idem*, review of *Étude de documents de la période d’Agadé appartenant à l’Université de Liège*, by H. Limet, *JCS* 27 (1975) 183–85.
28. J. Friberg, *The Third Millennium Roots of Babylonian Mathematics*, Vol. 1. Dept. of Mathematics, Chalmers University of Technology, University of Göteborg, No. 1978:9; *The Early Roots of Babylonian Mathematics*, Vol. 2, *ibid.*, No. 1979:15. These articles and those of the preceding note are summarized by Friberg in *A Survey of Publications on Sumero-Akkadian Mathematics, Metrology, and Related Matters (1954–1982)*, *ibid.*, No. 1982:17.
29. Vogel (*supra* n. 15) 382.

A Canon of Proportions in the Art of the Ancient Near East

Guitty Azarpay

THE NEO-SUMERIAN ARTIST CREATIVELY RESPONDED TO THE constraints of his medium. As the preferred medium for sculpture in the round, hard stones that were unavailable in the Mesopotamian alluvium were traditionally imported from distant lands, connected by a complex trade network, to ancient Sumer's urban centers. Because of the value and rarity of hard stones in the Sumerian heartland, the dimensions of the uncut block of imported diorite stone may be shown to have led to a modification of canonical proportions in the depiction of the human form in Neo-Sumerian sculpture in the round.¹

Looking back at the sweep of history, we find remarkable agreement between formulas used for the definition of proportions of the human form in Western art and those of the ancient Near East and Egypt. "The interest in human proportions," Erwin Panofsky reminds us, "is as old as art itself. Every sculptor, when rendering the human body, must dispose of the surfaces of his block . . . according to certain measures which he has in mind."² In more recent times, conservative artists have usually followed a proportional scale similar to that recorded in the treatise of the Flemish painter and theorist, Gerard de Lairese (1631–1711).³ Lairese's six-foot figure of ten face-lengths (fig. 1)⁴ embodies the ideal proportions of the eighteenth-century canon that was based on Renaissance models tabulated in accurate hand-

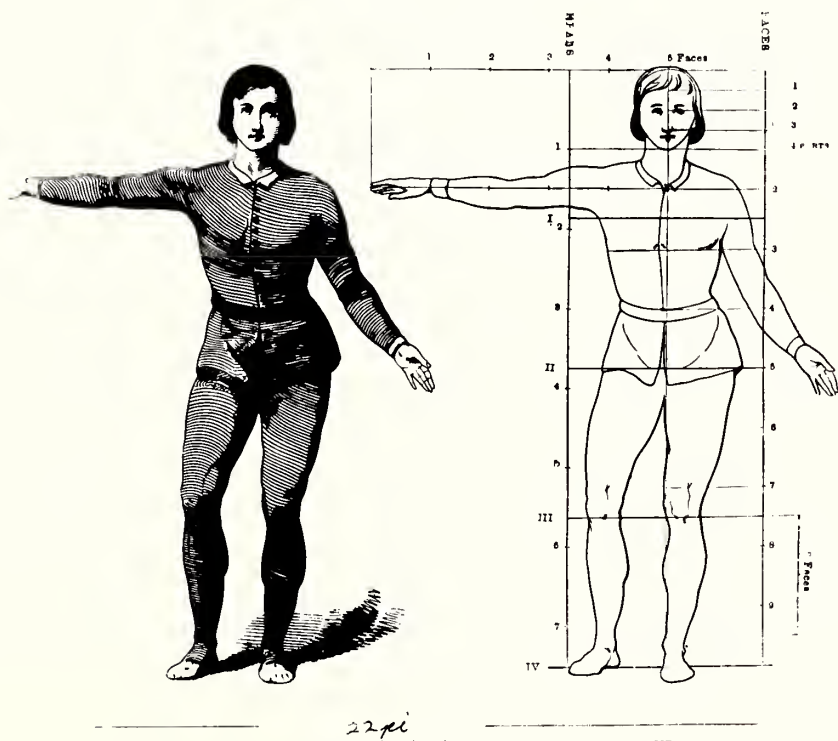


Fig. 1. Drawing of the "well-formed" male figure based on the seventeenth-century canon of proportions of Gerard de Lairese. From J. G. Chapman, *The American Drawing-Book* (New York 1864) 89.

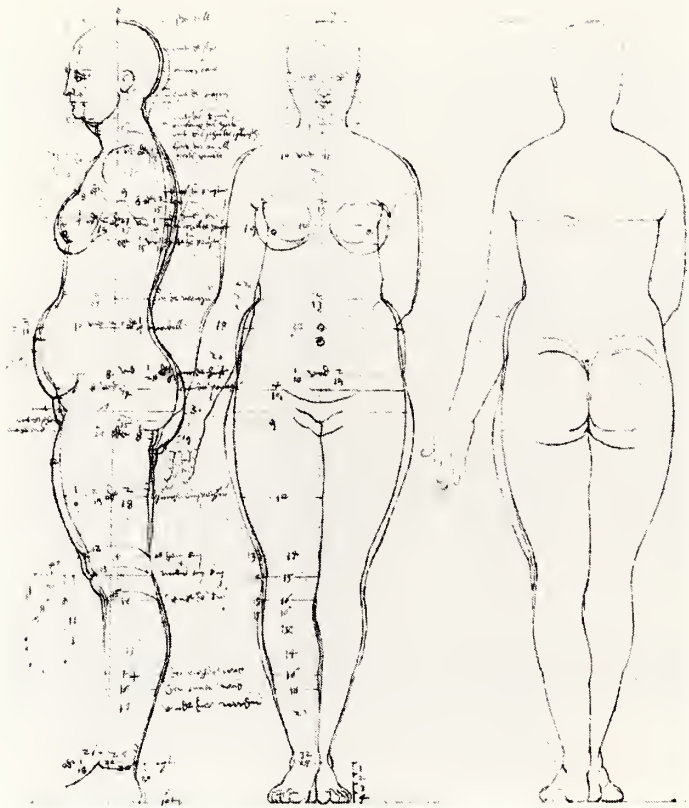


Fig. 2. Sketch by Albrecht Dürer showing the proportions of a six-foot female body of ten face-lengths (or eight head-lengths). *Dresdener Skizzenbuch*, fol. 152ba. From H. Rupprich, *Dürer: Schriftlicher Nachlass* (Berlin 1966) no. 18.

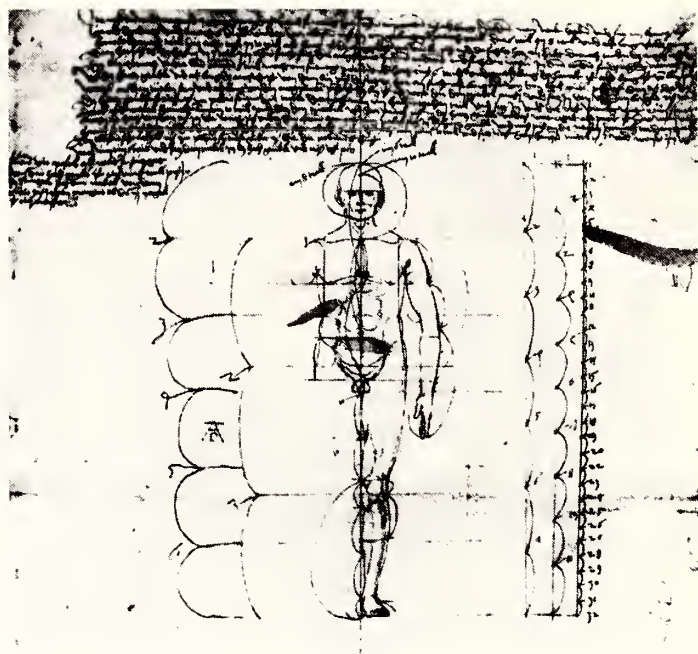


Fig. 3. Sketch by Albrecht Dürer showing the proportions of a six-foot male body of ten face-lengths. London, British Museum, MSS. 5231, fol. 1b-2a. From H. Rupprich, *Dürer: Schriftlicher Nachlass* (Berlin 1966) no. 40.

books, like *The Four Books on Proportions* by the sixteenth-century German artist and theorist, Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528).⁵ Dürer's delicate and detailed drawings show various views of the human body, with proportions expressed in numbers given in a scale at the margin, or indicated by a system of coordinates (figs. 2, 3). In later elaborations of his canon, Dürer shifted his focus from the search for the ideal form to studies of different physical types and temperaments, and to the articulation of minute fractions of anatomical parts.⁶ Whereas Dürer's studies in proportions eventually led to his interest in portraiture, other Renaissance theorists explored philosophical, cosmological, musical, and even magical notions through which they sought to capture a canon of absolute beauty.⁷ In that context, the human form was seen as the model for the ground plan of the basilica or for the most perfect geometric shapes and numerical ratios.⁸

Dürer's "well-built" figure was clearly based on the Vitruvian model inscribed in a square and circle and represented by Leonardo da Vinci's celebrated study (figs. 4, 5).⁹ If the large modular units in Leonardo's drawing return to medieval and Byzantine systems, the numerical ratios (six-foot body of ten face-lengths) deliberately follow the classical Greek model described in the writings of the first-century architect and theorist, Vitruvius.¹⁰ In the first chapter of his third book on architecture, Vitruvius asserted that a well-made body, with arms outstretched and feet together, just fills a square, while the same body, spread-eagled, fills a circle described

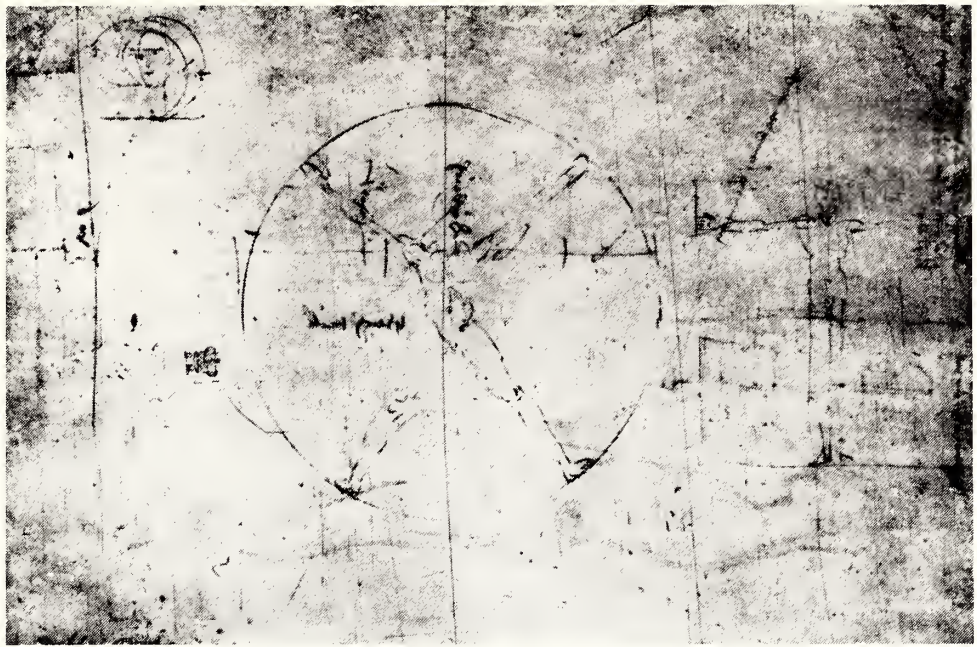


Fig. 4. Sketch by Albrecht Dürer showing the Vitruvian model inscribed in circle and square. London, British Museum, MSS. 5228, fol. 164b. From H. Rupprich, *Dürer: Schriftlicher Nachlass* (Berlin 1966) no. 37.

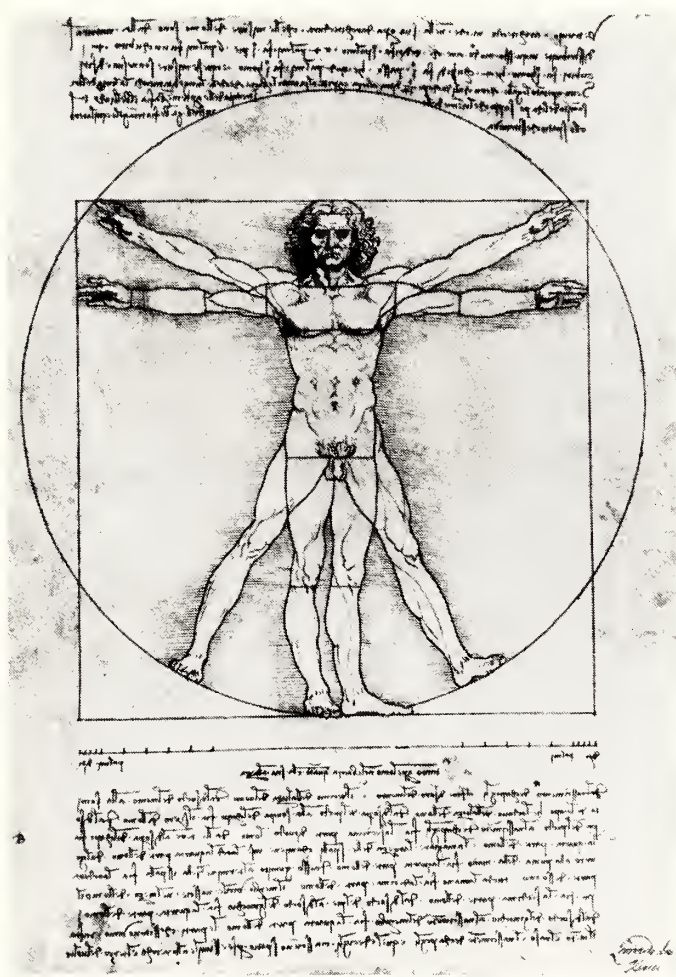


Fig. 5. Sketch by Leonardo da Vinci showing the Vitruvian six-foot man of ten face-lengths inscribed in circle and square (ca. 1485–90). Galleria dell'Accademia, no. 228. From L. Heydenreich, *Leonardo da Vinci* (New York/Basel 1954) pl. 15.

around the navel (III.i.3). Here, Vitruvius employed the ancient Egyptian canonical image, which measures four units in height, and four units from thumb to thumb, measured along the extended arms across the chest.¹¹

In a much-quoted passage, Vitruvius compared the proportions of the Roman temple with those of a finely shaped body. "Nature has so planned the human body,"

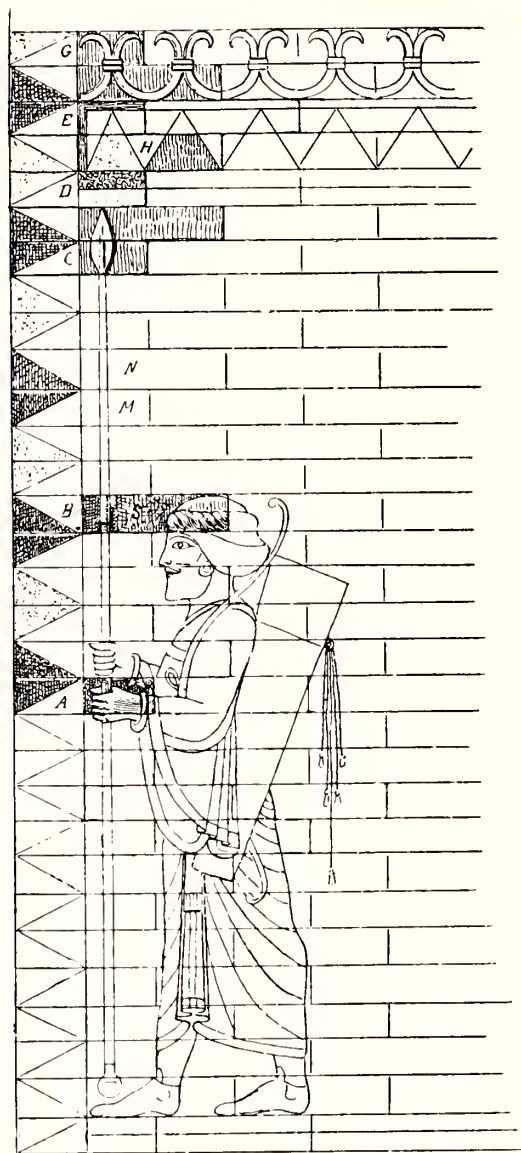


Fig. 6. Reconstructed drawing of molded and glazed brick panel showing a Susian guard. Palace of Darius I at Susa. From M. Dieulafoy, *L'Acropole de Suse 3* (Paris 1893) fig. 154.

he wrote, "that the face from the chin to hairline, is a tenth of the total body height" (III.i.4). He then described the ideal proportions of the human body as the "perfect 10" (III.i.5). The "perfect 10," the sum of $1+2+3+4$, is a Pythagorean concept that Vitruvius contrasted with the "perfect 6" (III.i.6). The sum of $1+2+3$, the "perfect 6" was important in the sexagesimal system of numeration, which prevailed in the ancient Near East through the Achaemenid period.¹² The decimal system of the Greeks was Egyptian in origin; the antecedents of the sexagesimal system of the Achaemenid Persians can be found in Mesopotamian sources.¹³ Consequently, if Egypt provided the model for the proportions of Archaic Greek sculpture of the seventh to early sixth century B.C., it was the ancient Near East that directly inspired the Achaemenid Persian canon.¹⁴ Glazed brick panels from Susa, represented by the Archer frieze in the Louvre and datable to the reign of Darius I (reigned 521–486 B.C.), offer evidence of correspondence between Achaemenid proportional ratios in art and Old Persian metrology (fig. 6).¹⁵ There the proportions of bodily parts are dictated by the dimensions of the modular brick expressed in ratios of the sexagesimal system of numeration.¹⁶

An early, if indirect, Mesopotamian model for the Achaemenid Persian system of proportions in art is offered by Neo-Sumerian sculpture in the round, attributed to the reign of Gudea, ruler of the Second Dynasty of Lagash, dated to the last quarter of the third millennium B.C. I have selected this group of sculptures for a study that seeks to quantify proportional ratios with the aid of photogrammetry. Gudea's

statues are unusually numerous, similar in posture and gesture, relatively intact, and frequently inscribed, all of which make them especially suitable for use as test samples.

The statues are circumscribed by time and place of manufacture. They are functionally alike, and finally, as products of Sumer's "golden age," they may be expected to exhibit the formal harmony and legibility evidenced in other cultural expressions of the Neo-Sumerian period.¹⁷

The need for precisely comparable works of art from the latest phase of sculpture from Gudea's reign has limited my choice of test samples to three nearly life-size, standing statues of Gudea. Two headless statues in diorite, known as Statues A and E, are in the Louvre (figs. 7, 8). They were found in excavations of 1887–88 at Tello, ancient Girsu.¹⁸ The third is a similar standing image of Gudea, with hands folded above the waist in the posture of prayer, uncovered in clandestine operations, and now joined to a matching head at the British Museum (fig. 9).¹⁹ Although obtained on the art market, the Gudea statue in the British Museum was selected for study as a test sample because it remains the only example of a standing statue, with matching head, that is identical to the inscribed Louvre Statues A and E in style, posture, gesture, and dimensions. It is also similar to both in its material of manufacture.

The Gudea statues date to a period of at least eleven years, when Gudea was ruler of the Second Dynasty of Lagash, founded sometime after the fall of Akkad in 2154 B.C. Gudea's reign may have in part overlapped with that of Ur-Nammu of Ur (reigned 2112–2095 B.C.), who ultimately defeated the last ruler of Lagash's Second Dynasty.²⁰ Inscriptions on the Louvre Statues A and E indicate that these images were made for temples at Girsu, then the capital of the region of Lagash, in Southern Mesopotamia.²¹ But these statues, like most of the other Gudea statues uncovered in French excavations at Tello, were found in the area of the site called Tell A, where, curiously, they had been assembled in the courtyard of the palace of an Aramaic ruler of southern Babylonia, Adadnadinahē (ca. 310–250 B.C.), in the Hellenistic period.²²

The Gudea statues, of which some thirty examples are known, show uniformity of form, function, and meaning.²³ But they exhibit variations in dimensions that range from statues measuring almost 1.5 m in height, like Statues A and E, to those measuring less than 0.5 m, represented by the seated image, Statue I, in the Louvre (fig. 10).²⁴ The smaller statues often display compressed proportions, seen in a large, neckless head attached to a short and squat body. Such proportional variations are frequently attributed to the differing dimensions of the original blocks of imported diorite, the preferred stone for Gudea's votive statuary.²⁵ The proportional variations in the statues of Gudea appear more pronounced in vertical, or height measurements, than in the horizontal, or width ratios.²⁶ The seemingly consistent proportions of head to the width of shoulders, and of facial features to the width of head, shared by these statues, have led to the assumption that a distinctive canon of proportions was used in the Gudea statuary.²⁷ If this hypothetical Neo-Sumerian canon of proportions, like the later Achaemenid system, were based on the prevailing metrology, then its identification and quantification might require reference to the rule of Gudea. Gudea's rule, represented by a measuring rod with sixteen approximately equal divisions, is depicted on the tablet placed on Gudea's lap, in Statues B



Fig. 7. Statue of Gudea of Lagash, Statue A, diorite. Tello, Neo-Sumerian period. Height 114 cm. Louvre AO 8.



Fig. 8. Statue of Gudea of Lagash, Statue E, diorite. Tello, Neo-Sumerian period. Height 132 cm. Louvre AO 6.

Fig. 9. Statue attributed to the reign of Gudea of Lagash, dolerite. Neo-Sumerian period. Height 71.1 cm. British Museum 122910.



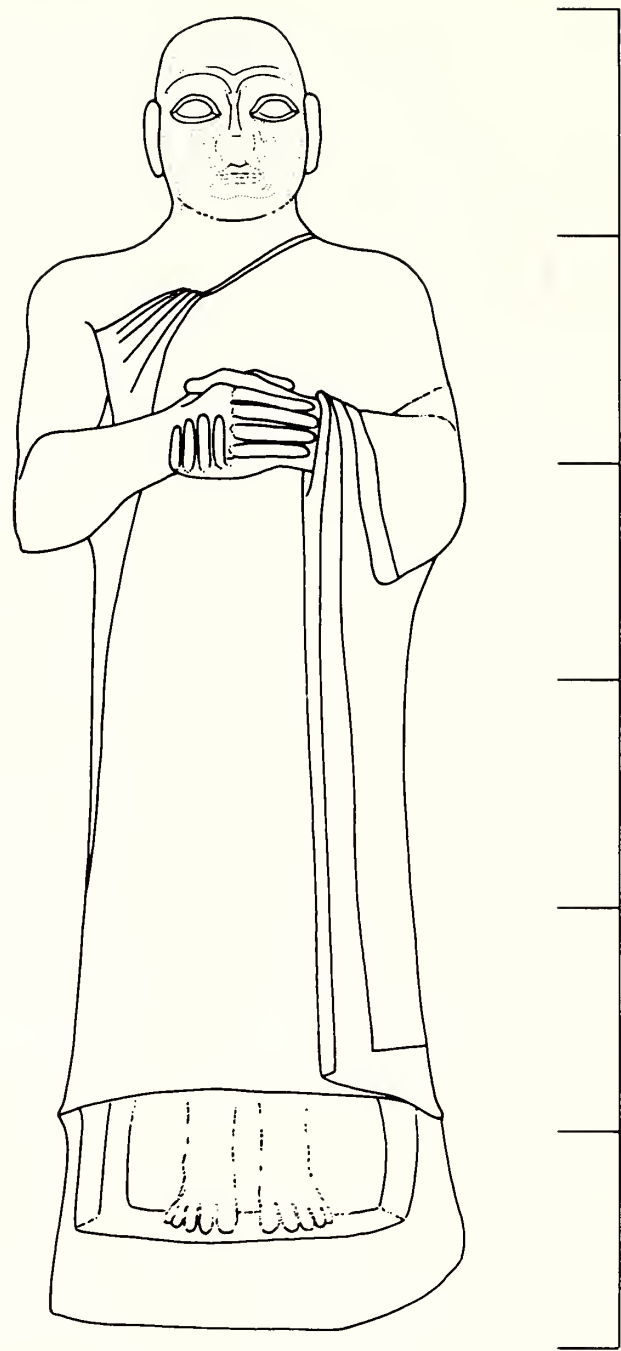
and F, in the Louvre.²⁸ The length of this rule (26.9 cm) corresponds to the Sumerian two-thirds of a cubit measure.²⁹

Using Gudea's rule (26.9 cm) as a standard of measure, I have assembled a composite based on the three standing statues of Gudea selected for study (fig. 11). The composite shows the overall height of the figure expressed in six multiples of the length of the forearm (here measured from elbow to wrist).³⁰ So each statue is six "cubits" tall, with the length of the cubit specific to the statue. The similarity in the proportional ratios between the three statues under study permits tentative reconstruction of the head, in the headless Statues A and E, by reference to the assembled torso and head in the British Museum (see Table 1). I propose here the following six divisions of the body: 1) *Head*: crown to chin; 2) *upper torso*: chin to elbow, vertical distance; 3) *lower torso*: elbow to hips, at the point of their maximum breadth; 4) *upper legs*: hips to knees; 5) *lower legs*: knees to hemline; and 6) *ankles to base*: hemline to baseline. The six divisions of the human form here coincide with the bends in the body. Photogrammetric measurements obtained, where possible, for these six divisions suggest that the life-size Gudea statues (from the latest group of sculpture from Gudea's reign) were conceived as tiers of superimposed units, or building blocks, that were reduced vertically in small-scale statues of Gudea.³¹ Thus the vertical divisions of the human body, like an accordion pattern, were subject to extension and reduction within a six-tiered format. Contraction in height, which produced the compressed proportions of small-scale Gudea images (see fig. 10), was thus produced through elimination of one or more vertical units from the total



Fig. 10. Statue of Gudea of Lagash, Statue I, diorite. Tello, Neo-Sumerian period. Height 45 cm. Louvre AO 1.

Fig. 11. A composite drawing of three standing statues of Gudea of Lagash (Statue A, Statue E, and BM 122910). Drawing by Jane Becker.



Divisions	Average	BM 122910	Statue A	Statue E
Crown to chin/neckline		22.1 cm		
Chin/neckline to base of block	123.0 cm		114.0 cm	132.0 cm
Chin/neckline to inner elbow line	20.9 cm	23.1 cm	19.0 cm	20.6 cm
Chin/neckline to base of left hand	26.2 cm	26.5 cm	23.4 cm	28.8 cm
Outer elbow to wrist	25.6 cm	23.5 cm	23.7 cm	29.7 cm
Base of left hand to buttocks	23.8 cm		21.8 cm	25.9 cm
Base of left hand to hemline	71.5 cm		65.4 cm	77.6 cm
Buttocks to knees	23.8 cm		21.8 cm	25.9 cm
Knees to hemline	23.8 cm		21.8 cm	25.9 cm
Hemline to baseline	25.4 cm		24.9 cm	25.9 cm

Table 1.

height of the six-tiered image. The differing dimensions of imported blocks of precious diorite was evidently the principal factor in the determination of the height/width ratios of Gudea statues. If the height of the uncut block, in proportion to its width, fell short of that required for canonical proportions, then one or more building blocks were eliminated from the vertical elevation of the image. Diorite was simply too precious a commodity to justify its reduction and dissection to conform to canon. The Neo-Sumerian sculptor, like the Achaemenid artist some fifteen hundred years later, thus responded to the priorities of his environment when he subordinated the artistic canon of his time to the dimensions of his medium, in this instance, the imported diorite block.

Some of the implications of this study are that systems of proportions in art were remarkably conservative, and that a long passage of tradition links the canons of our own age with those of early historic periods in the ancient Near East. That art is modeled on art, not on life, was elegantly phrased by E. H. Gombrich when he said, "Even after the development of naturalistic art, the vocabulary of representation shows a tenacity, a resistance to change, as if a picture seen could account for a picture painted."³²

I wish to thank the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery's curator of ancient Near Eastern art, Dr. Ann C. Gunter, and the gallery's director, Dr. Milo Beach, for their invitation to give the present paper, and for their special efforts toward the organization and realization of the Sackler Gallery's symposium.

Notes

1. For earlier research on the canon of proportions in the art of the ancient Near East, see G. Azarpay, W. G. Lambert, A. D. Kilmer, W. J. Heimpel, "Proportional Guidelines in Ancient Near Eastern Art," *JNES* 46 (1987) 183–213.
2. Erwin Panofsky, *The Codex Huygens and Leonardo da Vinci's Art Theory* (London 1940) 107.
3. Erwin Panofsky, "The History of the Theory of Human Proportions as a Reflection of the History of Styles," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (New York 1955) 105–7; William Cowper, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies, with Figures Drawn after the Life by Some of the Best Masters* (London 1698) table 1; Groot Schilderboek, *Aan de Schilder Kunst* (Haarlem 1740) 20–25.
4. J. G. Chapman, *The American Drawing-Book* (New York 1864) 88–89.
5. W. M. Conway, *The Writings of Albrecht Dürer* (New York 1958) 227–52.
6. H. Rupprich, *Dürer: Schriftlicher Nachlass* (Berlin 1966) pls. IIc.3, IIId; Panofsky (supra n. 3) 102; Conway (supra n. 5) 183.
7. Conway (supra n. 5) 183.
8. A drawing by F. di Giorgio presents an image of the paradigmatic man, the supreme archetype and the premise for the cathedral plan; reproduced in Robert Lawlor, *Sacred Geometry: Philosophy and Practice* (New York 1982) 93. Lawlor offers an explanation of the notion of anthropocosm on pp. 90–95.
9. Panofsky (supra n. 2) 50; Ludwig Heydenreich, *Leonardo da Vinci* (New York/Basel 1954) 111, pl. 151. Leonardo based his sketch of the proportions of the human figure on the Vitruvian model and intended it as an illustration of his treatise on painting.
10. Panofsky (supra n. 3) 89–99. Panofsky discusses the Byzantine and medieval systems of proportions on pp. 72–89. On the metaphoric interpretation of the spread-eagled human form shown within a circle in medieval art, see the "Cosmic Wheel," from the twelfth century *De Operatione Dei*, in Matthew Fox, *Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen* (Santa Fe 1985).

- 42; Panofsky (supra n. 3) 88.
11. E. Iversen, *Canon and Proportions in Egyptian Art*, 2d ed. (Warminster 1975) 14–15; idem, "The Canonic Tradition," in J. R. Harris, ed., *The Legacy of Egypt* (Oxford 1971) 57.
 12. Michael Roaf, "Persepolitan Metrology," *Iran* 16 (1978) 78. On the importance of the numeral 6 in Sumerian metrology, see M. A. Powell, *Sumerian Numeration* (Diss. Univ. of Minnesota 1971) 129.
 13. On the decimal system of numeration in Egypt, see G. J. Toomer, "Mathematics and Astronomy," in Harris (supra n. 11) 27–54. On the Mesopotamian sexagesimal system, see M. A. Powell, "The Origin of the Sexagesimal System: The Interaction of Writing and Visible Language," *Visible Language* 6 (1972) 5–221.
 14. E. Guralnick, "The Proportions of Kouroi," *AJA* 82 (1978) 470; idem, "The Proportions of Korai," *AJA* 85 (1981) 463; idem, "Profiles of Kouroi," *AJA* 89 (1985) 409. For use of the second Egyptian canon in Greek art up to the mid fifth century B.C., see E. Lorenzen, *Technological Studies in Ancient Metrology* (Copenhagen 1966). On the ancient Greek canon, see R. Tobin, "The Canon of Polykleitos," *AJA* 79 (1975) 307–21; A. F. Stewart, "The Canon of Polykleitos: A Question of Evidence," *JHS* 98 (1978) 122–31; idem, "Lysippan Studies," *AJA* 82 (1978) 163–71; Iversen, "The Canonic Tradition" (supra n. 11) 71–81.
 15. Azarpay et al. (supra n. 1) 190–98.
 16. Azarpay et al. (supra n. 1) 194–96.
 17. E. Strommenger, "Gudea (B. Archäologisch)," *RLA* (1971) 681; F. Johansen, *Statues of Gudea, Ancient and Modern*, Mesopotamia 6 (Copenhagen 1978) passim; B. Schlossman, "Portraiture in Mesopotamia in the Late Third and Early Second Millennium B.C.," *AfO* 26 (1978–79) 56–65; A. Spycket, *La statuaire du proche-orient ancien*, Handbuch der Orientalistik 7 (Leiden/Cologne 1981) 184–94. Literary expressions of the age are discussed by A. L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East*, Transactions of the American Oriental Society 46 (Philadelphia 1956) 211; S. N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago 1963) passim; Th. Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once . . . : Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven 1987) 386–444. Piotr Michalowski discusses the achievements of the Neo-Sumerian age and includes a bibliography in "Charisma and Control: On Continuity and Change in Early Mesopotamian Bureaucratic Systems," in McGuire Gibson and Robert D. Biggs, eds., *The Organization of Power: Aspects of Bureaucracy in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago 1988) 55–68.
 18. For Statue A, Louvre AO 8, "Petite statue debout," see Strommenger (supra n. 17) 681; Johansen (supra n. 17) 7–8. For Statue E, Louvre AO 6, "Statue aux larges épaules," see Strommenger (supra n. 17) 681; Johansen (supra n. 17) 9. For discussion of Horst Steible's study of the chronological sequence of inscribed Gudea statues, see G. Azarpay, "A Photogrammetric Study of Three Gudea Statues," *JAOS* (in press).
 19. Johansen (supra n. 17) 22 n. 63; Schlossman (supra n. 17) 56–60.
 20. P. Steinkeller, "The Date of Gudea and his Dynasty," *JCS* 40 (1988) 47–53.
 21. A. Falkenstein, *Die Inschriften Gudeas von Lagaš*, *AnalOr* 30 (Rome 1966) 681.
 22. The later palace at Tello was identified by its bricks, which were inscribed in Greek and Aramaic; A. Parrot, *Tello, vingt campagnes de fouilles (1877–1933)* (Paris 1948) 152.
 23. Johansen (supra n. 17) 28.
 24. Johansen (supra n. 17) 11–12.
 25. Johansen (supra n. 17) 6, 33. W. J. Heimpel offers the identification of Magan, named in Ur III sources, with Oman, in "Das Untere Meer," *ZA* 77 (1987) 21–91, esp. 22–49, 60, 69.
 26. Schlossman (supra n. 17) 57.
 27. A. Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia*, trans. J. Filson (London 1969) 62; E. Strommenger, "Das Menschenbild in der altmesopotamischen Rundplastik von Mesilim bis Hammurapi," *BaM* 1 (1960) 62; Schlossman (supra n. 17) 57; Spycket (supra n. 17) 190.
 28. Strommenger (supra n. 17) 682; Johansen (supra n. 17) pls. 19–22 and 28–30.
 29. E. de Sarzec et al., *Découvertes en Chaldée* 2 (Paris 1884) 192, pl. 15; M. A. Powell (supra n. 12) 128; idem, "Ancient Mesopotamian Weight Metrology," in *Studies in Honor of Tom B. Jones*, *AOAT* 203 (Neukirchen/Vluyn 1979) 77–87. Gudea's rule has sixteen divisions; a one-cubit rule would proportionately have twenty-four divisions.

30. Iversen (supra n. 11) 29, calculates the ratios in the Egyptian canon; there, the distance from elbow to wrist is four palms of the two-thirds measure, or one-sixth of the height of the figure.
31. The small-scale, inscribed statues of Gudea are now assigned to the early and intermediate groups of sculpture from the reign of Gudea, according to a recent study by Horst Steible to appear in *JCS*. The life-size, diorite statues of Gudea, on the other hand, are assigned to the latest phase when diorite was more plentiful and imported in the form of large boulders. For a fuller discussion, see G. Azarpay, "A Photogrammetric Study of Three Gudea Statues," *JAOs* (in press).
32. E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion, A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, Bollingen Series XXXV, 5 (Princeton 1960) 315.

Sculptors and Designers at Persepolis

Michael Roaf

THE STONE SCULPTURES DECORATING THE PALACES BUILT BY THE Persian king Darius the Great and his successors in the first half of the fifth century B.C. are well known and have been much admired, especially those on the facades of the Apadana, the largest of the buildings at Persepolis and one of the first to be erected. There is, however, one aspect of these sculptures that has been observed and criticized by many scholars, namely, the monotonous repetition of individual motifs and complete scenes. In the words of Lord Curzon, one of the most perceptive visitors to Persepolis,

It is all the same and the same again, and yet again. . . . With but slight variations it is always the same palace, the same tomb, the same pillared hall, the same base, shaft and capital. Everywhere the monarch is the same. There is nothing to distinguish one monarch from another. . . . His subjects pass in long procession to his presence. They represent different nationalities, and are clad in different garbs; but there is no variation in their steady, ceremonious tramp.¹

Even more pointedly, the distinguished art historian Henri Frankfort wrote:

The Achaemenian reliefs are monotonous and their repertory is most restricted. . . . The dullness of many of these designs cannot be gauged from published illustrations. . . . The deadliest sections, with files of numberless persons, are hardly ever illustrated.²

Frankfort's aesthetic judgment was based on twentieth-century attitudes toward art and may not have applied in fifth-century B.C. Persia, where the cumulative effect of repetition may have been intended to give emphasis and significance to the composition. But leaving aside its function and its artistic efficacy, the repetition enables us to investigate aspects of the artistic environment that can only be guessed at for other ancient works of art.

Nowadays it is customary to differentiate between the creative imagination and the craftsmanship involved in the manufacture of a work of art. In an aphorism attributed to D. Pye, "Design proposes. Workmanship disposes."³ The same dichotomy is evident in the titles of several papers in this volume contrasting artists and artisans. Probably this distinction existed in the past, although in the classical and the ancient Near Eastern worlds, technical ability was considered more worthy than originality, whereas today the highest praise is reserved for artistic vision.⁴ In the



Fig. 1. Detail, relief depicting guards, limestone. Persepolis, east side of the Apadana, north wing. Top register, guards 23–40; middle, guards 8–25; bottom, guards 1–18. Vertical line marks the division between different teams of sculptors.

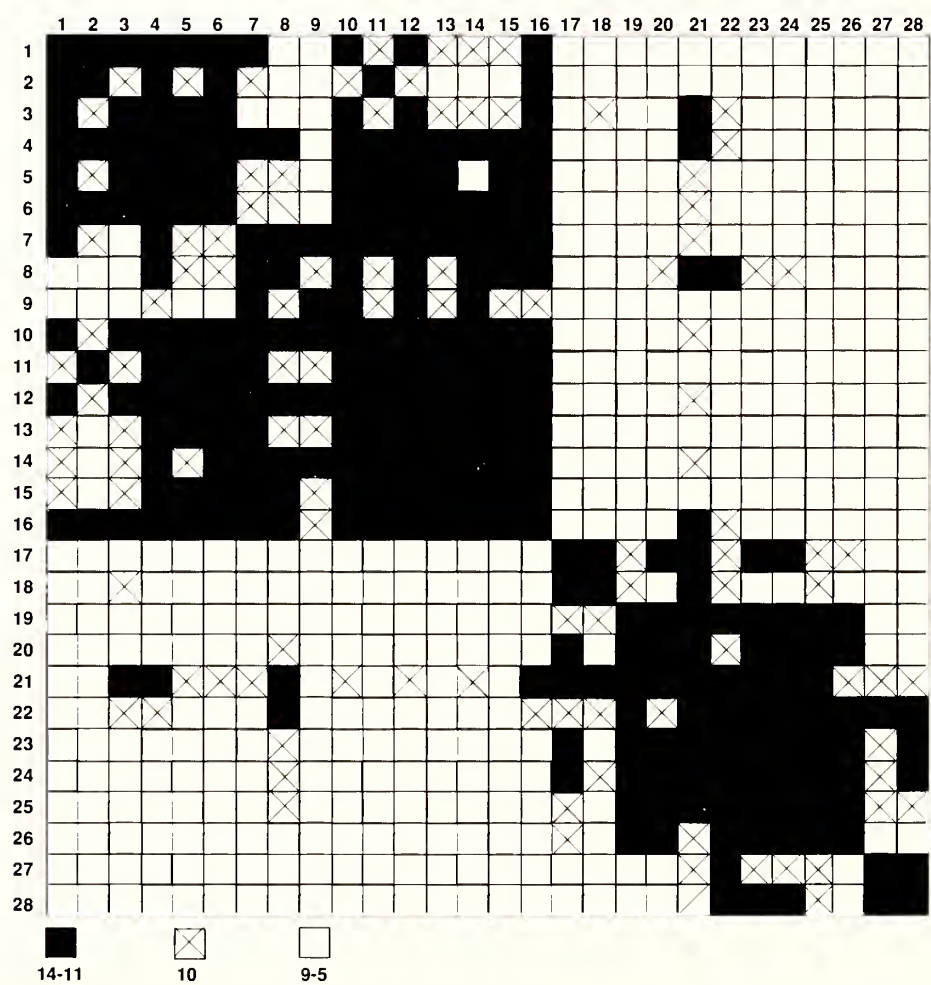


Fig. 2. Shaded similarity matrix comparing guards. Persepolis, east side of the Apadana, north wing, middle register.

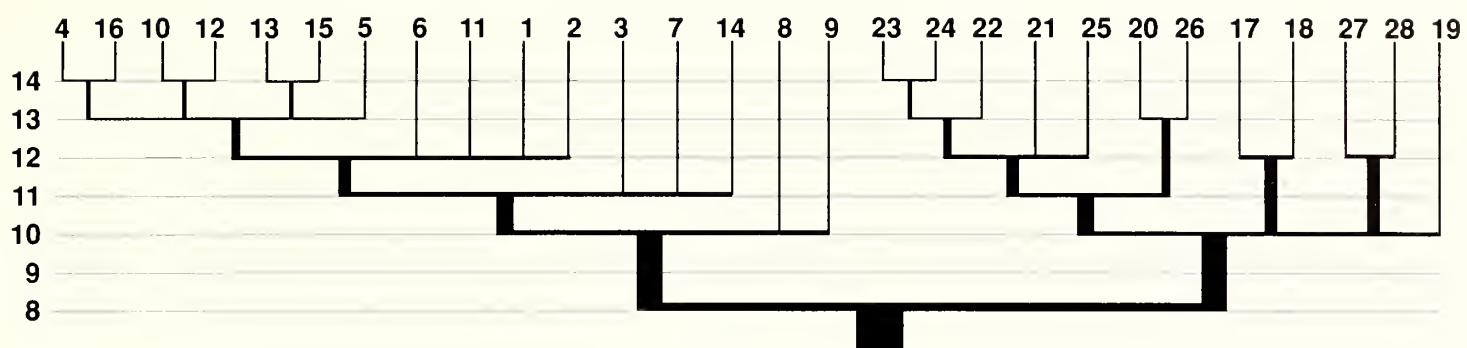


Fig. 3. Proportional link dendrogram comparing guards. Persepolis, east side of the Apadana, north wing, middle register.

minor arts, such as seal carving or jewelry, the line between design and execution is not easily drawn; however, in large-scale enterprises, such as the construction and decoration of palaces, these processes could be, and usually were, formally differentiated.⁵ The lack of abundant textual sources makes it difficult to distinguish the various operations involved; even with more explicit textual evidence, we would be challenged to define the limits of decision-making between the “artists” and the “artisans.” At Persepolis, however, we can study the small differences between repeated motifs and scenes, and thus investigate the different areas of responsibility of those involved in its creation.

Sculptors

Let us start with one of Frankfort’s “deadliest sections, with files of numberless persons.” Here, guards in identical dress and pose are repeated along the facade of the Apadana (fig. 1). Any differences between the figures can be attributed not to differences in design but to variation in the workmanship, and thus to the idiosyncracies of the sculptors.⁶

In an effort to quantify similarity between figures in the middle register of guards, I chose fourteen attributes of the sculptures for comparison. These attributes include minor variations in the details of costume and equipment, in the direction of the curls, and in the shape of the shoelaces. The similarity between any two figures can be quantified by counting the number of shared attributes. The results of my comparison are shown in a similarity matrix, where the darker squares indicate close similarity and the lighter squares dissimilarity (fig. 2). The matrix reveals two clusters of commonality: guards 1 to 16 and guards 17 to 28. The distinction between these two groups is maintained in the dendrogram (fig. 3), in which branches join similar groups of guards.

The divisions charted by the mathematical comparisons are also evident in the style of the figures. In all three registers, the shapes of the heads noticeably change on either side of the vertical line, with those to the left having larger heads than those to the right (fig. 4). Other details change at this junction—the shape of the ear, the

outline of the cheek, the length of the left thumb, the depth of carving of the rosettes, and many other minor differences—suggesting that these two groups were carved by different sculptors. Furthermore, on this section of the facade, two types of sculptors' marks appear repeatedly in the background of the relief or in the rosette border (fig. 5). The first mark is a double diamond, and the second is shaped like a tree or plant. The double-diamond mark appears five times in the scene of the guards, once at the interface between the groups. (The apparently anomalous double-diamond sign in the top register is carved in the rosette border, and the style of the rosettes indicates that the double-diamond group carved more of the border than they should have.) The tree mark occurs only once but is carved in the rosette border exactly in the middle of the right-hand group.

These marks confirm the division of the guards into groups carved by different sculptors. They are also of interest because identical marks are found on the column bases in the so-called Treasury, suggesting a close relationship between the sculptors of the reliefs and the stonemasons who carved the column bases. This relationship is emphasized by the texts that record payments to the workers at Persepolis. In one of these texts, the sculptors are classified as "stone workers, who make stone sculptures."⁷ Clearly, the sculptors were thought of as being a type of mason and were not considered members of a separate profession.

Fig. 4. Detail, relief depicting guards, limestone. Persepolis, east side of the Apadana, north wing, guards 15–18 in the middle register. The guards on the left were carved by the double-diamond team and those on the right by the tree team.



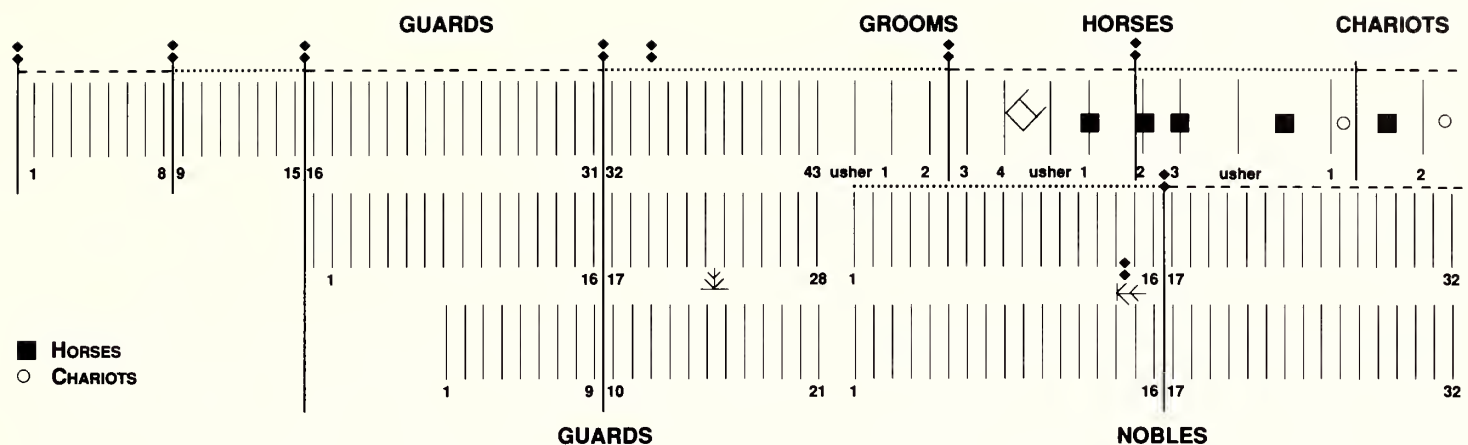


Fig. 5. Diagram showing the positions of sculptors' marks and the division of work between teams of sculptors. Figures below the dashed lines were carved by the double-diamond team, below the dotted lines by the tree team.

The sculptors' marks probably signify the work of a team, perhaps led by a master craftsman, rather than the work of an individual. We see this not only in the sculptors' marks but also in variations in the style of carving within a group and by the unfinished sections of the reliefs, which suggest that different members of the team were allocated different responsibilities. Perhaps one roughed out the figure, another carved the body, another carved the heads, another polished the figures, and so on. A team organization has also been proposed as an explanation for the masons' marks on the Treasury column bases, because of variant carvings of the same sign.⁸

The differences that can be attributed to different sculptors or different teams of sculptors are trivial. The presence or absence of an eyebrow, the direction of the curls of the beard, and so on, are differences that were not obvious and indeed might well have been obscured when the reliefs were painted.

Moving to a slightly less "deadly" section of the same facade, the sculptors' marks again show that each scene was split between the same two teams, who carved an almost equal number of figures. The double-diamond mark in the rosette border between nobles 14 and 15 marks an additional section of the rosette border carved by the double-diamond team, as is shown by the style of the rosettes. No double-diamond mark was found dividing the chariot scene, but the details of the horses and figures show that the right-hand chariot was carved by the double-diamond team. The division between the two groups was carried to its logical conclusion in the scene of horses in the top register, where the front of the middle horse was carved by the double-diamond team while the groom and rear of the horse were carved by the tree team. This is suggested by the position of the sculptors' mark and is proved by the details of the carving. It demonstrates the merely mechanical role of the sculptors in the carving of the reliefs.

Clearly, the workers who carved the stone sculptures were accurately following an established, detailed model, which they did not create. Thus, it is misleading either to seek the inspiration for Achaemenid art in the nationalities of the craftsmen or to identify the nationalities of the sculptors on the basis of the iconography of the reliefs.⁹

Draftsmen

I have mentioned before that along with individual motifs, complete scenes are also repeated. The most obvious example is the design of the royal tombs, which remained almost unaltered from the reign of Darius I to that of his great-great-grandson Artaxerxes III one hundred fifty years later. The only difference is that the blank lower panel was omitted in the later tombs. Because the earlier tombs were carved high on the vertical cliff of Naqsh-e Rostam, the panel was necessary, but the later ones were carved into the slope of the hill above the Persepolis citadel.

Later buildings and reliefs copy the earlier ones, though scenes were repeated even on the same building. Thus, figures on opposite sides of a staircase or a doorway often show the same scene reversed; for example, the design on the east side of the Apadana follows the pattern on the north side, which was probably begun earlier.¹⁰ But the direction of the figures was altered on the east side through a combination of reflection (exchanging left and right as in a mirror) and reversal (seeing the figure from the other side). This process is illustrated by the reliefs found in the Treasury. As Giuseppe and Ann Britt Tilia proved, these reliefs were originally placed in the centers of the north and east facades of the Apadana, with the subject peoples in front of the king and the guards and nobles standing behind the king (figs. 6, 7).¹¹ Reflecting (interchanging left and right) the north side scene (fig. 8) and comparing it to the east side scene (see fig. 7), we see that virtually every feature of the design of the east side could have been derived from that of the north side by either reflection or reversal.

Deducing that two arrangements are versions of the same scene implies two stages of design: first, the original schema; and second, the mechanical process of repeating and modifying this design. The first, more creative stage is seen only in the earlier buildings at Persepolis, for the later buildings copy and adapt from the earlier ones, repeating with only minor modifications the original compositions of the time of Darius. Thus, the sequence and iconography of the subject peoples depicted on the doors of the Hall of a Hundred Columns and on the tomb facades of Artaxerxes I and Artaxerxes III almost exactly follow the model of the east door of the Central Building and the facade of the Apadana.¹²

There are a few cases where the repeated design differs from the original. For example, the Persian ushers on the north side of the Apadana have ribbed head-dresses, whereas those on the east wear plain headdresses. Likewise, Median ushers carry swords on the north side but not on the east. The guards on the north side of the Apadana have incised headbands and wear bracelets, while those on the east have plain headbands and no bracelets. In a more radical departure, the middle register of nobles on the east side of the Apadana seems to draw on the bottom register of the east side rather than the middle register on the north side. The bottom register on the east side nearly replicates the model of the north side. Perhaps the original design of the middle register was lost, or it was thought easier to modify the design of the bottom register than to reverse and reflect once again the thirty-two nobles. These modifications were assigned to the sculptors as part of the design. The amount of freedom allowed in this stage of the design was greater than that allowed to the sculptors, but it was still an insignificant contribution to the stylistic component of the Persepolis reliefs.

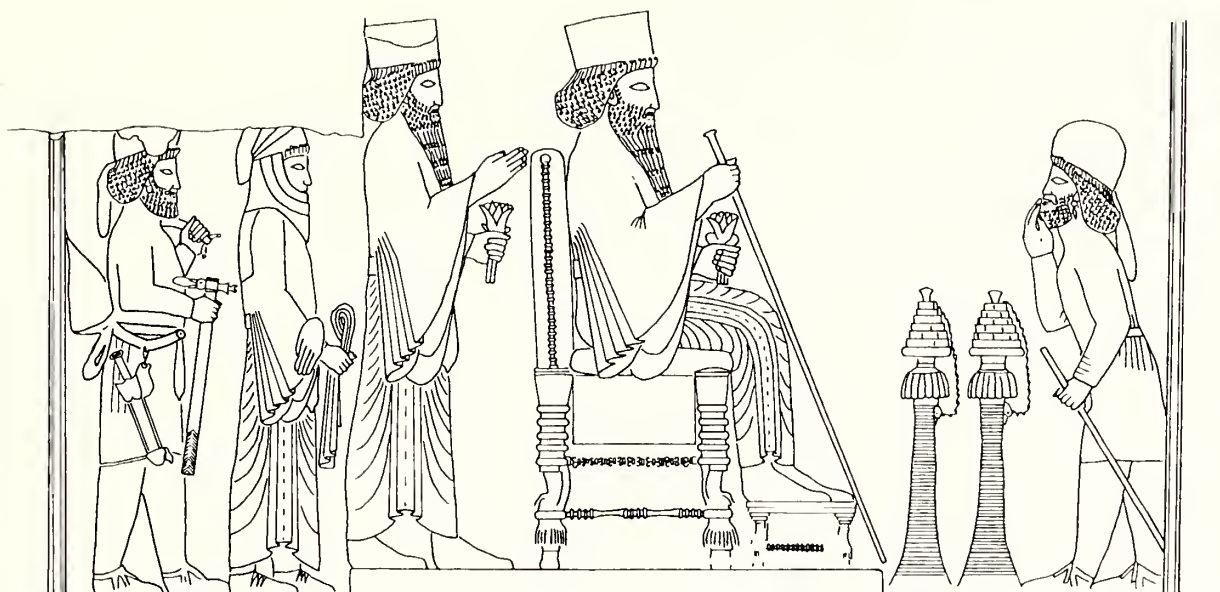


Fig. 6. Drawing of relief in central panel. Persepolis, north side of the Apadana.

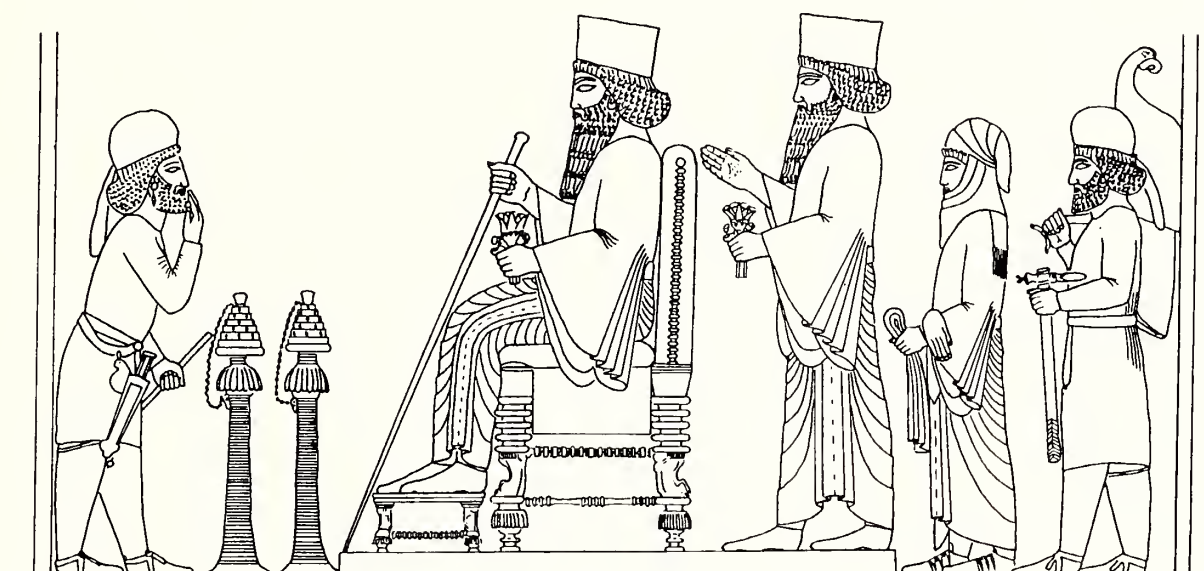


Fig. 7. Reconstructed drawing of relief in central panel. Persepolis, east side of the Apadana; after A. B. Tilia, *Studies and Restorations at Persepolis and Other Sites of Fars, IsMEO Reports and Memoirs XVI* (Rome 1972) fig. 3.

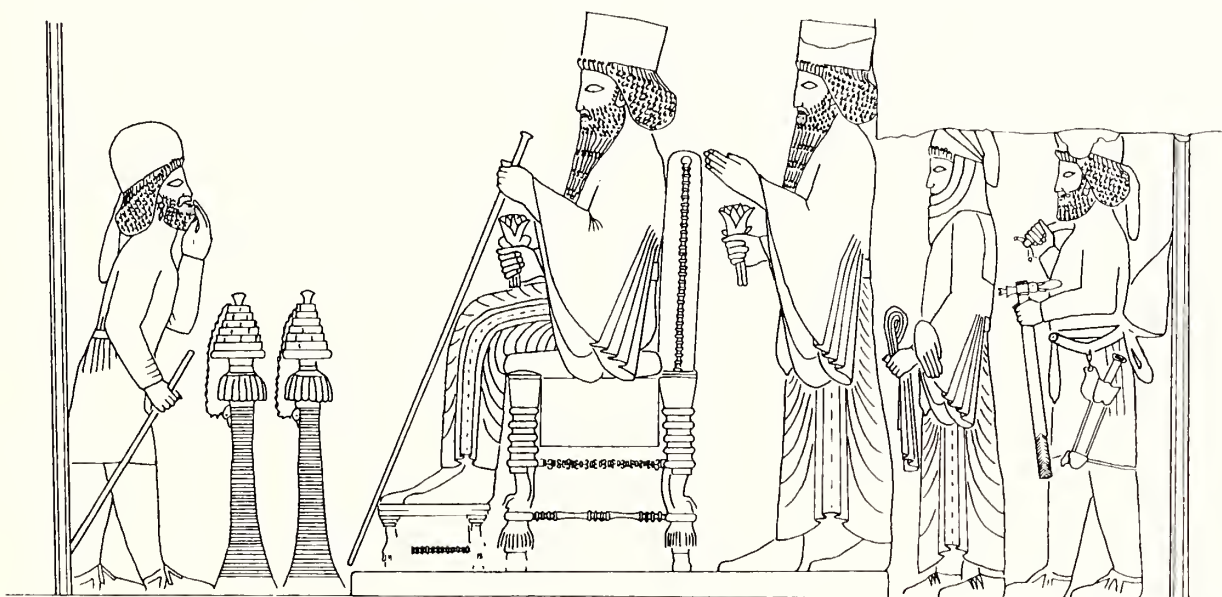


Fig. 8. Mirror image of relief shown in fig. 6.

Designers

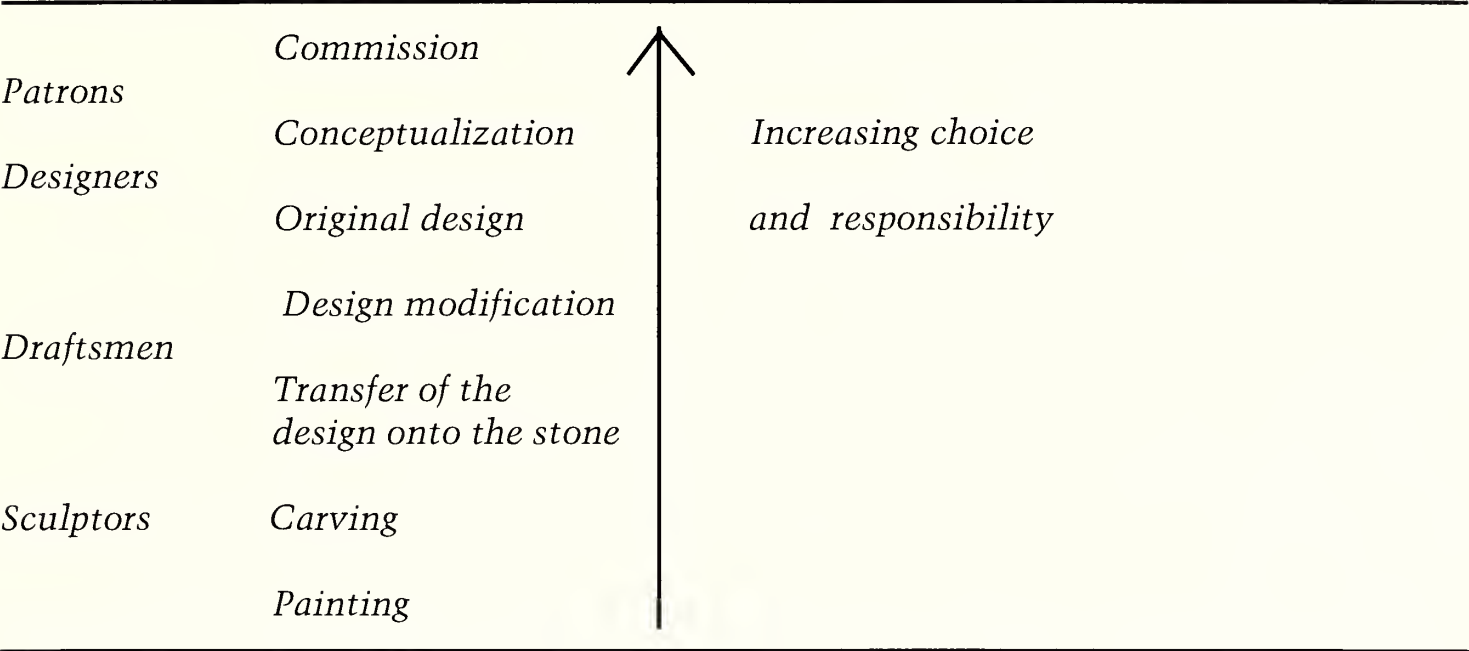
The designs on the earlier buildings at Persepolis show more originality than is found in the later buildings. In the earlier buildings, traditional Near Eastern concepts of architectural decoration were adapted and remodeled into a form suitable for the citadel of Darius, the ruler of the world from the Oxus to the Nile, from the Danube to the Indus.¹³ The inspiration for both the architecture and its decoration is to be found in the earlier Persian palaces at Susa and at Pasargadae as well as in the palaces of Babylonia and Assyria, with occasional motifs being borrowed from Greece, Egypt, Elam, Media, and Scythia.¹⁴ The stacked folds of the Persian robe are Greek in origin, the winged bulls are clearly derived from Assyria, the winged disc on the doorways comes from Egypt. Perhaps most astonishingly, the principal scene on the Apadana depicting the king enthroned finds its closest parallel in the Assyrian wall painting at Til Barsip, where the same composition occurred a thousand miles away and about two hundred years earlier (fig. 9).¹⁵ At Til Barsip, the king holds a staff in his right hand and a ceremonial flower in his left as he sits on a high-backed throne with his feet resting on a footstool. The throne stands on a low dais. A high official approaches the king, while beardless servants and a bearded weapon-bearer stand behind the throne. Although the Apadana reliefs include the crown prince, a single beardless servant, censers in front of the king, and different details of dress and gesture, the overall similarity between the scenes is striking.

These few examples indicate that the designer was someone of exceptional ability, familiar with the artistic traditions and styles not only of Persia but also of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and other regions. More significantly, the designer not only carefully selected the particular motifs but also arranged them in a harmonious fashion to create an integrated—yet totally artificial—style. He (or she or they, for we know nothing about the designer) also composed the scenes with great skill. For example, in the procession of nobles on the north side of the Apadana, the designer subtly achieves the transition from the formal rigid structure of the guards to the informal gathering of the nobles by shifting from the regular rhythm of the first nine nobles (who are almost identical in the two registers) to the freer composition of the



Fig. 9. Reconstructed drawing of wall painting. Til Barsip, Room XXIV; after F. Thureau-Dangin and M. Dunand, Til-Barsip (Paris 1936) pl. XLIX.

Fig. 10. Chart of proposed stages of production and allocation of responsibility in the creation of the Persepolis reliefs.



next seven nobles and back to the more structured composition of the final sixteen nobles.¹⁶ In this way the design conveys both the order and informality of the court.

Patrons

Apart from the designer(s), the king must have been the other important influence on the reliefs at Persepolis. Inscriptions at Persepolis and Susa show that the Persian kings took a personal interest in the design and construction of their palaces. “I built it secure and beautiful and adequate, just as I was intending to,” is how Darius described his work at Persepolis,¹⁷ and other rulers echoed these sentiments. The king’s involvement should come as no surprise, for the expense of the project must have been considerable. But the daily supervision of the work was probably delegated to the high officials residing at Persepolis; the king would have been consulted only occasionally or when he visited the site. Nevertheless, we may assume that the king approved the design, and that the final result was consistent with the image he wished to convey.

Conclusion

The “dull repetition” at Persepolis makes it possible to study the responsibilities and choices of those involved at different stages of the creative process (fig. 10). These categories represent overlapping areas of involvement by different officials and workers, with each stage subject to supervision and revision by those in authority. We can begin to separate out the different tasks and to determine how much responsibility each worker was allowed, assuming that the artisans contributed virtually nothing to the design or to the iconography. A similar allocation of responsibility was probably the norm on other major building projects, including: the construction of the palaces at Pasargadae and Susa; the embellishment of Babylon under the Chaldaean kings; the building of the royal palaces of the Assyrians at

Nimrud, Khorsabad, and Nineveh; and even the decoration of the Parthenon and the Sistine Chapel.

The extent to which the influence of the patron—in the case of Persepolis, the Persian king and his high officials—and the designer(s) overlapped is still a matter of debate. And it is precisely here, between the commission of the patron and the mechanical proficiency of the draftsmen, that our interest is focused; for here resides the genius of those who transformed the king's aspirations into lasting monuments of stone and created Achaemenid art.

Notes

1. G. N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, Vol. II (London 1892) 195.
2. H. Frankfort, "Achaemenian Sculpture," *AJA* 50 (1946) 11.
3. Quoted in C. Nylander, *Ionians in Pasargadae: Studies in Old Persian Architecture* (Uppsala 1970) 20.
4. A. Burford, *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society* (London 1972) 185. The status of the craftsman was, however, always low: Plutarch *Vit. Per.* 2.1; *Hdt.* 2.16; *Arist. Pol.* 1278a.
5. Michelangelo's almost single-handed painting of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel might be thought a counterexample, but even in this case the processes of design and execution were kept rigidly separate.
6. The evidence and its analysis are discussed in greater detail in M. Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis, Iran* 21 (London 1983) 1–89.
7. PT 1957–1. For further discussion of the textual sources, see M. Roaf, "Texts about the Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis," *Iran* 18 (1980) 65–74. Although these texts cannot be associated with particular reliefs or even particular buildings they do give interesting information about the sculptors. In particular, the texts suggest an unexpectedly close relationship between "wood-workers, who make wooden sculptures, and stone workers, who make stone sculptures," and they show that the wages of the sculptors were similar to those of other laborers and that they were not paid extra for their particular skill.
8. C. Nylander, "Mason's Marks in Persepolis: A Progress Report," in F. Bagherzadeh, ed., *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on Archaeological Research in Iran* (Tehran 1974) 219–20. Also Roaf (*supra* n. 6) 90–92.
9. As for example, G. M. A. Richter, "Greeks in Persia," *AJA* 50 (1946) 26. Nationalities mentioned in the texts who are associated with stoneworking are Ionians and Lydians (DSf), Egyptians (PT 9), Carians (PT 37, PT 1963–2), and perhaps Babylonians (PT 1963–20). Other nationalities of workers include Syrians, Skudrians, Cappadocians, Sogdians, and Assyrians.
10. Roaf (*supra* n. 6) 103–26, for a list of the details of the differences between similar scenes on the same building. Again, the identity of the sculptors does not match the subject matter; for the teams who carved the subject peoples on the east side of the Apadana carved the guards and nobles on the north side and vice versa.
11. A. B. Tilia, *Studies and Restorations at Persepolis and Other Sites of Fārs*, Vol. I, *IsMEO Reports and Memoirs XVI* (Rome 1972) 173–240.
12. M. Roaf, "The Subject Peoples on the Base of the Statue of Darius," *CDAFI* 4 (1974) 86–89 and chart on p. 149.
13. M. C. Root offers an eloquent view of this process in *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*, *Acta Iranica* 19 (Leiden 1979).
14. I address the overriding importance of Mesopotamian influence on Persepolis in *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis* (Diss. Oxford Univ. 1979) 270–319.
15. For a color illustration see A. Parrot, *Nineveh and Babylon* (London 1961) pl. 112. A date towards the end of the eighth century B.C. is probable.
16. For a drawing of this section, Roaf (*supra* n. 6) fig. 114 on pp. 108–9; for a photograph, E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, Vol. I, OIP 68 (Chicago 1953) pls. 57–58.
17. DPf lines 13–15, trans. G. G. Cameron, in Schmidt (*supra* n. 16) 63.

Circles of Artistic Programming: Strategies for Studying Creative Process at Persepolis

Margaret Cool Root

THE CONCEPT OF AN ARTISTIC PROGRAM IMPLIES AN INTEGRATED enterprise in which overarching principles of design, style, and iconography are devised, codified, and then applied in a way that yields a coordinated whole. Theoretically, at least, a study of program thus implies concern with multiple aspects of specific artistic environments. Such a study must involve characterizations of patrons, audience, and artists; the interactive roles of these groups; and, of course, the artistic product itself as form and content, which has been expressively as well as formally determined by the complex interactions brought about within the particular environment. I shall explore this concept of program from the vantage point of the court art of the Achaemenid Persian Empire (ca. 550–331 B.C.), especially as this is epitomized at Persepolis, the ceremonial capital city in Southwestern Iran.¹ Architecture, sculpture, and seals will be the material focus of my analysis.

What descriptive and interpretive strategies can we devise for dealing with the artistic environment at Persepolis? Does the art produced there in fact add up to a “program” as I have defined it above? If so, can we offer preliminary observations about how this program was devised, codified, and implemented? Can we suggest avenues by which to probe further the program’s intended effects on the types of audience targeted by its messages? Through questions such as these, I aim to offer an analytical framework for approaching Persepolis as a rich exemplar of theoretical issues in artistic creation. I hope to spark further interest in the potentials of Achaemenid art, and indeed of ancient Near Eastern art more generally, as material that could enhance the lively trends of interdisciplinary dialogue in art history.

Most scholarship on Persepolis has suffered miserably from Hellenocentric biases coloring its description and interpretation. For instance, two favorite words used to describe the architectural sculpture are “boring” and “deadly”; numerous other pejorative words have had an equally deadening effect on critical inquiry.² Perhaps we may be able to penetrate the barriers created by such terms. At least we can ask: what is it that scholars have reacted to as “frozen,” “deadly,” “boring,” “slavish”? Do their responses adequately reflect the richness of intention and response to the monuments in antiquity? Is it possible that the features that provoke negative reactions from many modern scholars actually had powerful expressive significance within the programmed environment at Persepolis? If so, it becomes

interesting to examine the historiographic reasons for negative modern response—just as it is certainly crucial to explore the possibilities of a rather different and rich intentionality of the work in its original context.³ Clearly, we cannot talk about artistic environment at Persepolis productively unless we assume that the site merits such discourse.

With that assumption, I shall offer a summary and highly selective characterization of Persepolis, avoiding the negatively burdened terminology and suggesting modes of rethinking Persepolis that may ultimately prove more stimulating. I will then discuss strategies for studying the creative process at the site. Finally, I will suggest some avenues for further investigation, especially concerning the notion of audience response to the program.

Persepolis

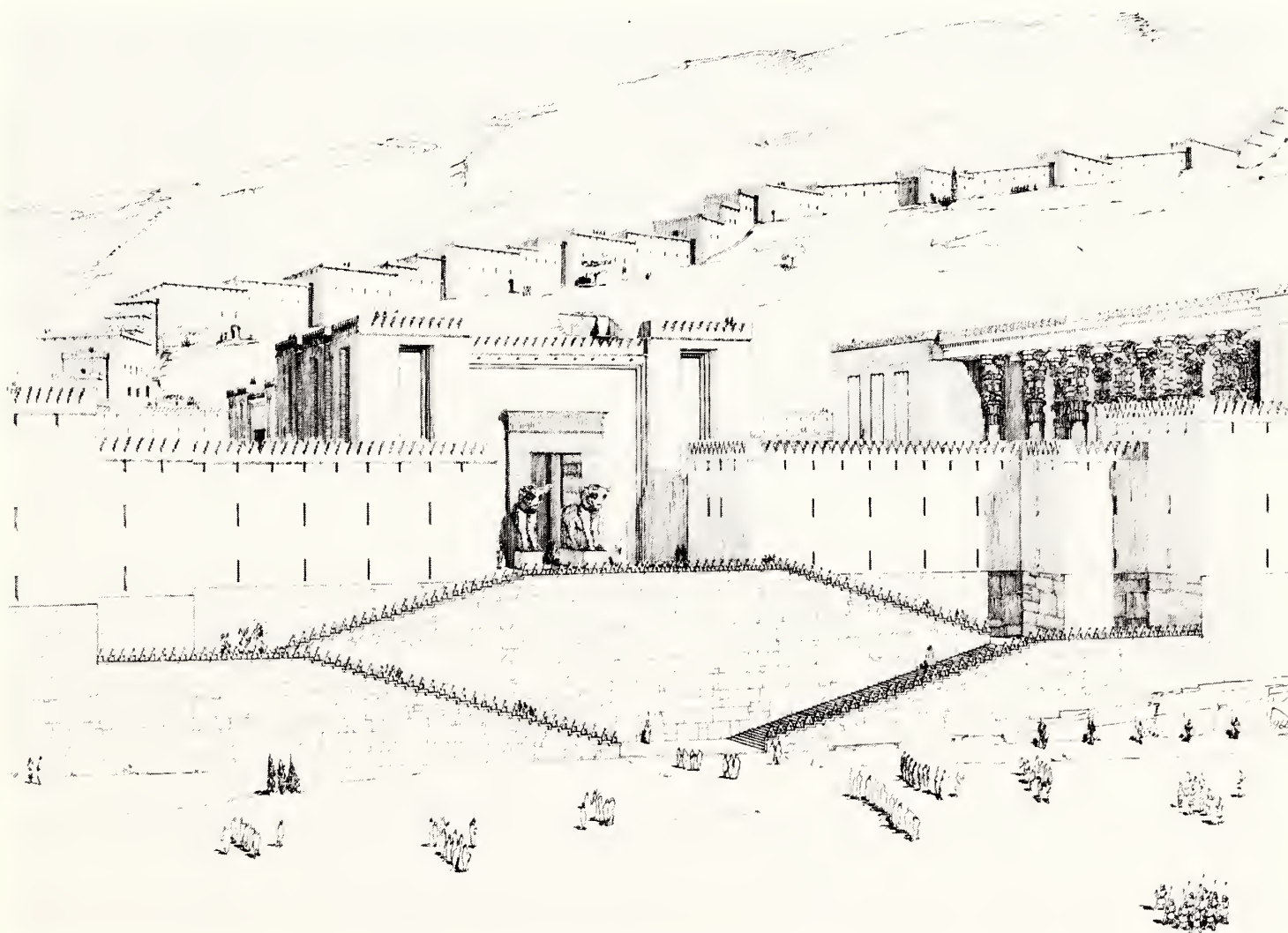
The dynastic capital of the Achaemenids, situated in the Marv Dasht plain, Persepolis was founded by Darius the Great in about 515 B.C., shortly after his return from the reconquest of Egypt. The creative energy expended on this massive project reflects the period at which the empire was at the height of its glory, with a domain sweeping from the Indus across Egypt. At Persepolis, a citadel measuring roughly 450 by 300 meters formed the stage for a series of ceremonial and administrative edifices.⁴ This platform backs up against rugged fortified hills on the east. Brick fortification walls originally extended this enclosure over much of the remaining perimeter of the citadel. On the west, however, the great columned portico of the Apadana palace seems to have opened onto an area with an unimpeded vista of the imperial horizon (fig. 1).⁵ Unlike other Achaemenid capitals used extensively by Darius and his successors (Susa, Babylon, Ecbatana), Persepolis was a new creation. Through its very being and essence, Persepolis was surely meant to epitomize the nature of the empire and to symbolize the magnetic force of imperial centeredness.⁶ Persepolis was also the hub of agrarian administration in Fars province and was the central bureau for the disbursement of rations along the southern Royal Road across the empire. We know of Persepolis's bureaucratic role from the Fortification archive's thousands of administrative tablets, whose seal impressions will become significant to my discussion in the section on creative process.⁷

The citadel of Persepolis may be ascended only by a monumental double-reversed staircase on the west (fig. 2).⁸ The steps are broad but very shallow, so that one is made to proceed ever so slowly along the smooth facade of the platform. The speed-restricting nature of the stairs is often described as having been designed for the easy ascent of horses. While it may be true, this suggestion makes me uncomfortable. It evokes the old mentality of seeing everything Achaemenid, including the extraordinary architectural tradition of hypostyle halls, as nothing more than a barbarian parvenu's attempt to translate nomadic encampments into stone. Whether or not the cavalry ever mounted the Persepolis stairway, nonpractical messages may have been imbedded in this architecture as well. Imperial architecture, like religious architecture, can enhance the symbolic relationship between visitor and ruler (or cult figure) by manipulating the visitor's access to critical spaces. The architecture assists the visitor by offering clues implicit and explicit about behavior in and



Fig. 1. Aerial photograph, taken in 1937 by E. Schmidt, of Persepolis platform looking onto Marv Dasht plain.

Fig. 2. Reconstruction by F. Krefter of west facade of the Persepolis platform. From F. Krefter, *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen* (Berlin 1971) Beilage 21.



reaction to the surroundings.⁹ This notion is, I believe, a key element to understanding how the programmatic environment of Persepolis was meant to work.

The slow, majestic stairway ascent at Persepolis is a leitmotif of the architecture, one which undoubtedly had symbolic implications within a milieu that encompassed the traditions of both Mesopotamia and Egypt. In Mesopotamia, ascending the staircase was seen as a progression upward through the ziggurat toward divine realms. In Egypt, climbing the stairs was connotative of the climb toward judgment by Osiris.¹⁰ Indeed, the formal element of stairs at Persepolis was used to mimic liturgy, to evoke the aura of a godlike royal presence, and—experimenting with tensional relationships of space, place, time, distance, and scale—to exploit the differences between the king and the peoples of his realm.¹¹ The double-reversed stairway to the citadel divides the space into diverging streams, teasing time and distance with the slowness of delayed gratification, forcing temporary suspension of upward action at the landing plateau, and, finally, coaxing the inevitable convergence toward the unified center of the colossal gateway, which simultaneously channels visitors inside. In better-appreciated artistic environments, these psychological dynamics are acknowledged and analyzed in terms of their richly histrionic and aesthetic intentionality.¹² As stage-setting ceremonial court architecture, the Persepolis stairway relates closely to the explorations of Bramante at the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹³ I find the comparison between Persepolis and the artistic environment of the Renaissance significant at various levels, and I will return to this point.

The citadel facade at Persepolis is a monumental jigsaw puzzle of massive, irregularly shaped blocks fitted together without mortar and with meticulous precision. Erecting this citadel was a labor-intensive feat that proclaimed imperial power in the harnessing of human energy to royal prerogative. For the Persepolis citadel, Darius rejected the rational modularity of the Graeco-Lydian ashlar masonry adapted earlier by Cyrus the Great for *his* new city of Pasargadae.¹⁴ It would be dangerous to attribute the break with Pasargadae as a reflection of Darius's less refined aesthetic sensibilities and certainly incorrect to understand the treatment at Persepolis as a careless, haphazard approach. We should heed the Elamite inscription on the south side of the platform:

I, Darius, great king, king of kings, king of lands, king upon the earth, son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenid. And Darius king says: As for the fact (*uk-ku*) upon this place this fortress was built, formerly here a fortress had not been built. By the grace of Ahuramazda I built this fortress. And Ahuramazda was of such a mind, together with all the gods, that this fortress (should) be built. And (so) I built it. And I built it secure and beautiful and adequate, just as I was intending to.¹⁵

The Persepolis terrace deserves serious architectural study parallel in scope to that performed by Carl Nylander for the Pasargadae Takht. We must explore the wall at Persepolis in comparable detail and investigate possible historical links with similar constructions elsewhere.¹⁶ In the context of our present discussion, I wonder whether this choice of masonry style was intended as a metaphor. Perhaps the massive irregular stones, perfectly bonded without mortar, expressed the idea of smoothly joined geopolitical parts of the great empire—each different, yet made to work in unison—fitted into a harmonious whole in support of the king and his city.

It is thought-provoking to see this great surface as a symbolic mapping of the Achaemenid hegemony in its variegated geographical aspect. This notion allows us to imagine the structure as a conceptual stage for the entire environmental display at Persepolis—a massive mapped description of neatly locked-in world parts embracing the bedrock core of the glorious capital of Persia.¹⁷

In highly abstract terms, I have interpreted this masonry as projecting the same historically pinpointed worldview as that emphasized rather explicitly in some of the extant royal inscriptions of Darius's early years. Using various metaphors, the rhetoric evokes an empire that had been thrust into chaotic dispersion. Through the heroic and pious efforts of Darius, the empire was reassembled, made whole again. In the Behistun inscription, Darius speaks at length about the scattering of the empire, the rebellion of the provinces. He then goes on to say:

The kingdom which had been taken away from our family, that I put in its place; I reestablished it on its foundation. . . . I restored to the people the pastures and the herds, . . . I reestablished the people on its foundation, both Persia and Media and the other provinces. As before, so I brought back what had been taken away. By the favor of Ahuramazda this I did: I strove until I reestablished our royal house on its foundation as (it was) before.¹⁸

A text of Darius from Susa, preserved partially on several tablets, also presents the theme of restoration of the parts of the empire. Here, reestablishment is first conceived as one involving *social* structures: putting the people back in their proper places (literally and morally). This thought is followed up by an example of reestablishment of *physical* structure: the time-honored royal activity of rebuilding as an assertion of political stability.

Saith Darius the King: Much which was ill-done, that I made good. Provinces were in commotion; one man was smiting the other. The following I brought about by the favor of Ahuramazda, that the one does not smite the other at all, each one is in his place. My law—of that they feel fear, so that the stronger does not smite nor destroy the weak.

Saith Darius the King: By the favor of Ahuramazda, much handiwork which previously had been put out of its place, that I put in its place. A town by name. . . , (its) wall fallen from age, before this unrepaired—I built another wall (to serve) from that time into the future.¹⁹

In conjunction with the message of putting the empire back together, Darius's early texts also feature grand statements about the universality of his rule. The Babylonian section of the inscription on the south side of the Persepolis citadel speaks of Darius's role in bringing together peoples of different types and languages, and lands of different topographies and different distances from the center of the empire.

Great (is) Ahuramazda who is the great(est) among all the gods, who heaven and earth created and men created and who all prosperity gave (to) men who live thereon, who Darius king created and to Darius king gave the kingdom on this wide earth, on which are many lands: Persia, Media, and the other countries (of) other languages ("tongues"), (on) which (are) both mountain(s) and (level) country which (are) on this side of the sea ("Bitter River") and yonder side of the sea, which (are) on this side of the desert and yonder side of the desert land.²⁰

The universality of Darius's rule is also invoked in his tomb inscription, which reads "I am Darius the Great King, King of Kings, King of countries containing all kinds of men." The lands of the empire bestowed upon Darius by Ahuramazda are listed next, and the inscription continues, "Ahuramazda, when he saw this earth in commotion, thereafter bestowed it [the empire] upon me, made me king; I am king." The closing section extols the virtue of cooperation in a rhetoric that could as well accompany the abstract masonry representation of wholeness out of harmoniously joined parts just as it explicitly *does* accompany the tomb *relief*.

If now thou shalt think that "How many are the countries which King Darius held?" look at the sculptures (of those) who bear the throne, then shalt thou know, then shall it become known to thee: a Persian man has delivered battle far indeed from Persia.²¹

The sculpture shows personifications of the different lands of the empire raising the king on his podium.²²

We may not be able to *prove* that the planners of Persepolis had a metaphorical vision of empire in mind when they decided upon the style of the citadel masonry. Archaeologists of historical periods tend to feel uncomfortable with postulations unless they can be backed up by an explicit text "explaining" a visible phenomenon, as with Darius's tomb relief. Scholarship on ancient art has traditionally been dominated by those who study the visual arts as a poor second to text.²³ This is a serious problem because, even in antiquity, the written word did not, of course, necessarily reflect some absolute truth. Few intentions concerning aesthetic and symbolic aims of artistic monuments were recorded in ancient texts; and many of the formally evocative aspects of specific monuments were perhaps not consciously anticipated, let alone verbalized and documented, at the moment of planning. This discrepancy between art and its textual documentation is not unique to the ancient Near East. Furthermore, a visual work of art has autonomous expressive powers that are not interchangeable with or dependent upon written description. The discipline of art history, especially for post-ancient periods, sanctions modes of analysis of this autonomous aspect. These modes of inquiry tend not to be admissible to the philologically based archaeologist.²⁴ The study of the artistic environment at Persepolis can benefit from an open-minded integration of possibilities emanating from both disciplinary traditions.

My hypothesis that the choice of citadel masonry style reflects metaphorical content may, for instance, be overstating the explicit intentionality of the monument at its planning stages. Still, form may evoke meaning-laden response even when such a response was not consciously calculated by the creator. As Rudolf Arnheim has commented in discussing the subtle impact of expressive conditions,

It is the function of the metaphor to make the reader penetrate the conventional shell of the world of things by juxtaposing objects that have little in common but the underlying pattern. Such a device, however, works only if the reader of poetry is still alive, in his own daily experience, to the symbolic or metaphoric connotation of all appearance and activity. . . . There is [for instance] a tinge of conquest and achievement to all rising — even to climbing a staircase. If the shades are pulled up in the morning and the room is flooded with light, more is experienced than a simple change of illumination.²⁵

Once the slow ascent of the platform had been accomplished, the visitor to



Fig. 3. Detail, relief depicting delegates, limestone. Persepolis, eastern stairway of the Apadana.

Persepolis arrived (significantly enough for my argument) at the Gate of All Lands.²⁶ Colossal Assyrianizing sculptures of bulls and man-bulls guarded the east-west doors, dwarfing humanity even as they also provided access inward.²⁷ The Gate of All Lands funneled the assembled peoples (referred to so explicitly in Darius's texts as having been brought back into the embrace of the dynasty) into the extraordinary landscape of Persepolis. Here, focus shifted from the abstract macrocosmic map of geographical hegemony suggested by the citadel facade to a *representational* sphere inhabited by symbolic flora and fauna, and by king, courtiers, and peoples of the realm. Thus, for instance, the stairways of the Apadana present a populated microcosmic version of the citadel masonry metaphor. The visitor ascended alongside representations of gift-bearing delegates from the aggregated lands of the empire. These delegates bring not only themselves, but also the accumulated wealth of reestablished wholeness (fig. 3).²⁸

The evocative force of the Apadana reliefs is not universally acclaimed. In fact, these reliefs are often the focus of pejorative comment on Persepolitan sculpture. As Sir Mortimer Wheeler has observed,

The monotonously repetitive figures and scenes of the great stairways tell no story save that of tributary wealth and the regimented grandeur of the imperial court. The endless and rather tiresome processions have the quality of sub-architectural ornaments. . . . It is no chance that those mournful, immobile processions of laboriously chiselled and polished soldiers and sycophants beside the stairways of the palace have about them a semblance of the pageantry of death.²⁹

Elsewhere I have attempted to characterize some of the subtle symbolic nuances of the Apadana reliefs.³⁰ A teasing relationship between space and time is created here by depicting delegates who are *about to be* led forward to offer their gifts. The

tension is achieved through several compositional and iconographical devices. One key element is the hand-holding motif, which refers explicitly to presentations before the divine in Mesopotamian and Egyptian traditions. Because of its very specific associations, the motif imbues the sculpture with a spiritual power as well as a complex connotation of ambivalence between the voluntary and the compulsory.

The buildings on the citadel have skeletal structures of stone, once fleshed out in brick. The stone jambs of doors and windows, the columns, and the stairways are the vehicles for architectural sculpture here. Iconographically, the reliefs exhibit an emphatic and complex internationalism. The iconography needs further investigation, but so does the aesthetic basis of the art, especially along lines that can move beyond Hellenocentric dogma.

Focusing on an abstract iconography, I have been dwelling on the citadel facade precisely because its non-representational character enables us to postulate meaning imbedded in *form*, in *technique*, in *pattern*, and in the tactile/visual marriage of *surface* to experience. I propose that the expressive environment of Persepolis united form and meaning in a quite remarkable way. The dismissive characterization offered by Henri Frankfort demands revision.

Achaemenian sculpture is a form of decoration, and it is the nature of ornament to be subservient. The reliefs merely serve to emphasize an important architectural feature of the terrace complex.³¹

In fact, the reliefs are not “merely” decorative. They convey explicit messages and actually enhance meaning. The building parts selected for sculpture are all zones that express liminality, the physical and psychological transition from one point and state to another.³² The representations do not depict events or ideas in the past tense, in historical terms. They depict events and ideas of transitory enactment, threshold experiences: personifications of the subject nations lifting the king off the ground; delegates from all lands about to move up to offer gifts to the king; columns carved to project a remarkably transitory state, hovering on the tips of inverted lotus bases. The decorative qualities of this sculpture are certainly important, but they need to be analyzed systematically to understand their force within the aesthetic dynamic of the whole.³³

The motif of the royal hero on doorjambs of the Palace of Darius, the “Harem” of Xerxes, and the Throne Hall of Xerxes/Artaxerxes I provides an example (fig. 4). The relief is very low, never breaking out of its architectural framework. Nevertheless, the style creates an impression of planar complexity and robust physicality. It achieves this effect without intruding into the visitor’s space; he who walks through the doorway confronts the hero figure in a relationship that echoes the hero’s confrontation with the beast. The message of power and assertive protection is clear even though the relief is low and the composition formal. It is missing the point to call this art subservient to architecture. Rather, we might say that by virtue of its planned interactive expression, architecture and sculpture together project layers of meaning.³⁴

The elaborately overlapping and cascading folds of the hero’s robe create a foil of expressive abstraction for the sensuously modeled musculature of his exposed arms



Fig. 4. Relief depicting royal hero slaying lion, limestone. Persepolis, Throne Hall of Xerxes/Artaxerxes I (doorjamb relief of the Central Building in background).



Figs. 5 and 6. Details, relief depicting royal hero slaying bull, limestone. Persepolis, Throne Hall of Xerxes/Artaxerxes I.



Fig. 7. Detail, relief depicting Christ in Judgment. Conques, Church of Sainte-Foy, ca. 1124.

and legs (figs. 5, 6). This combination of abstraction and naturalism within the figure of the hero reverberates in the figure of the beast, where elaborately patterned fur foils passages of swelling muscular volume on fore and rear legs. The composition is an "X" formation of legs and arms, with the intersection precisely at the dagger-gripping hand of the royal hero. In this creation of chiasmic composition, the force of the abstract drapery is on a par with the explicit diagonal placement of the plastically defined limbs of hero and beast.

This sculptural motif has an effect comparable to that produced by the Romanesque sculpture of Christ enthroned in the Last Judgment tympanum of the west portal at Conques (fig. 7). The rich abstractions of the drapery of Christ have much in common with the robes of the royal hero at Persepolis. Most interesting is the similar way in which the bared arm of Christ reaches out from the folds of hieratic splendor to suggest the aggression of corporeal might. This comparison is instructive. In Romanesque art, we are accustomed to seeking meaning and expressive content in the abstraction of many forms and in the marriage of sculpture to its ecclesiastical architectural setting.³⁵ The program at Persepolis has the potential for just this type of exploration. But we are *not* accustomed to thinking about Persepolis in these terms. We are not even accustomed to looking at the Persepolis reliefs carefully. We tend to ignore the possibility that message might be imbedded in the style of this art.

Drawing a comparison between the hero at Persepolis and the Christ of Conques

is not meant to imply a historical connection between the two representations. Rather, I wish to point out the potential richness of discourse between specialists of these two milieus. Explorations of Romanesque architectural sculpture can provide important insights into conveying messages through manipulations of abstract forms (such as drapery) and through the charging of liminal zones of architecture (the portal) with similarly liminal representations (the Last Judgment). Scholarship on medieval and later art, including ethnographic studies of contemporary non-industrial societies, can also provide insights into other issues relevant to our discussion. One such issue involves exploration of the range of mechanisms, both social and practical, by which a coherently functioning and meaning-laden style can be achieved through the collective effort of artists who do not necessarily share the political or social goals expounded by the program.³⁶ Acquaintance with discourse on later periods will not resolve questions of creative process in ancient Near Eastern art. But it can suggest approaches to the questions we are already beginning to ask, and it can point up the implications of specific substantive investigations of our own material.

Recent scholarship has begun to investigate the practical means by which Achaemenid architecture and sculpture achieved coherence. Guitty Azarpay has sought to demonstrate that Achaemenid sculptural representations of the human figure, both in relief and in the round, are based on a system of proportions derived from the architectural unit of the brick rather than upon an anatomically based concept.³⁷ Her research has exciting implications. For one, it suggests ways of approaching the concept of the architectural "subservience" of Achaemenid sculpture in a positive mode. It invites us to view this art as the reflection of a systemic coherence of architectural and decorative form in the creation of an ideologically ordained aesthetic landscape bespeaking the ethos of total cooperation of all its parts. As Darius says in his tomb inscription, "The man who cooperates, him according to his cooperative action, him thus do I reward."³⁸ This message clearly relates to the metaphorical sculptural representation of peoples united in the effort of bearing Darius on his podium. On another more elemental level, the inscription may also relate to the aesthetic concept of a program that energetically seeks formulas for eliciting expressions of unity.

Detailed study of formal elements of the Persepolis program might yield further evidence for a concerted, consciously applied system unifying architecture and architectural decoration. The repetition of the rosette with delicate concave petals might be an example. The rosette appears as a ubiquitous framing element (see fig. 3), as an ornament applied to the collars of animals and to the eyes of column volutes, and as a form echoed in isolated petals for floral and faunal detailing (figs. 8, 9, and 10). Perhaps an extremely elaborate program of patterning is at work here. A study of this patterning could help us understand some of the formal means by which a sense of visual unity pervades the landscape. I believe this analysis would reveal a tight plan that worked simultaneously as a conveyor of expressive qualities and metaphorical message. For such a study, one might gain theoretical assistance from work in linguistic patterning and the mnemonic devices employed in oral traditions of message-conveyance. And, moving back into the realm of visual analysis, one might escape the notion that repetition of patterns meant boredom at Persepolis.³⁹

Fig. 8. Fragment of floral column base, limestone. Persepolis.



Fig. 9. Relief depicting sphinx and floral elements, limestone. Persepolis, southern facade of Palace of Darius.



Fig. 10. Bull's ear from colossal capital, interior showing petal-form detailing, limestone. Persepolis, Terrace.

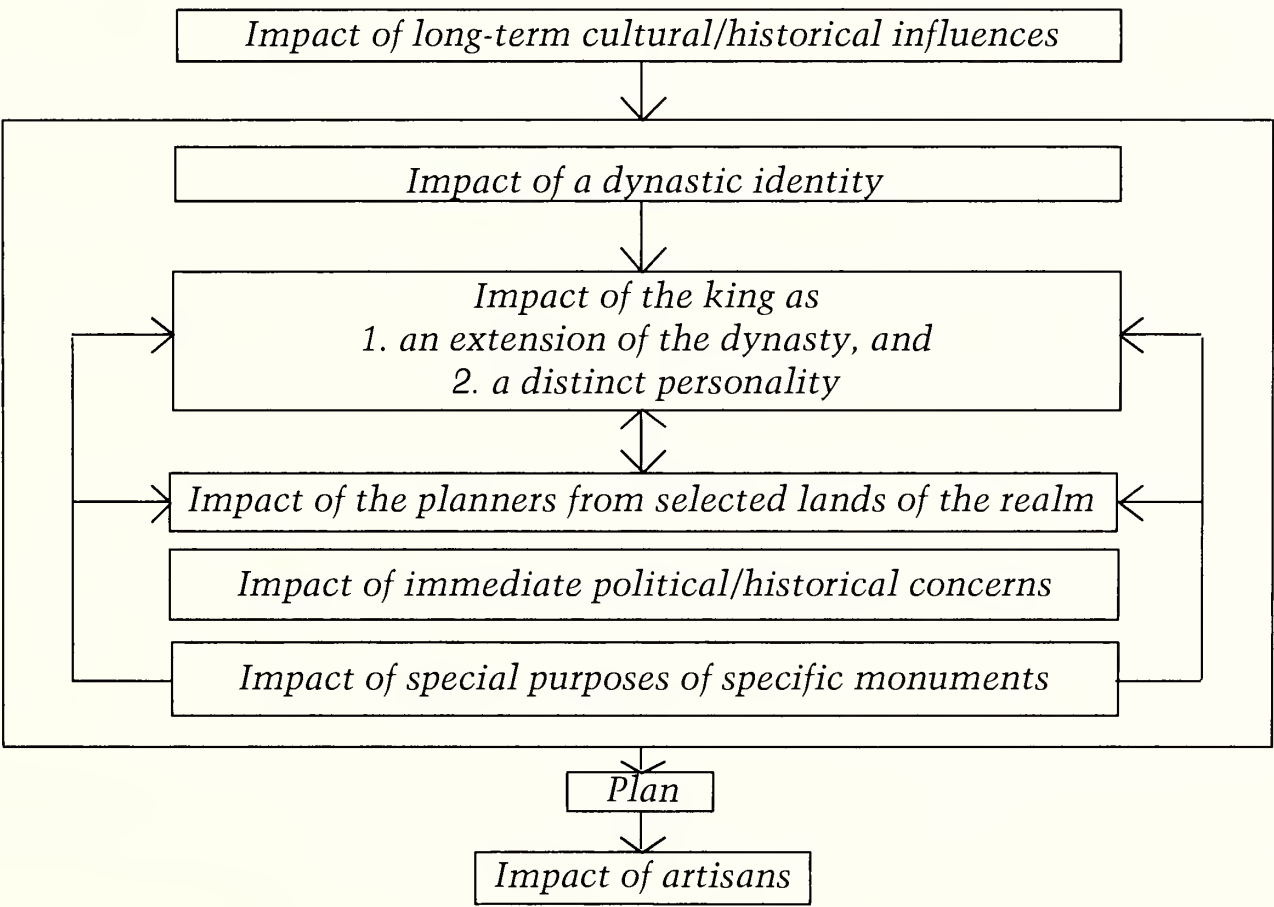


Mechanisms of Creative Process

Ten years ago, when I published *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire*, I presented a detailed argument for the programmatic nature of the iconography of Achaemenid imperial art. I was concerned primarily with sculptural representations of kingship. The iconographical program, I argued, drew intentionally, systematically, and brilliantly upon the traditions of the Near Eastern civilizations to which the Persians fell heir as creators of a vast empire from Egypt to the Indus. Antique images, culled largely from the realms of cosmic and cultic representation, were adapted to a new political context that expressed imperial power in terms of metaphors of ecumenical harmony. This mining of venerable ideas and forms had to be understood as a highly creative effort in itself, since it involved extraordinarily subtle reworkings of symbolic language.

I concluded that it was no longer possible to dismiss Achaemenid art as a random set of eclectic “borrowings.” I maintained the necessity of understanding this art as having been created—in any meaningful sense—by the royal patrons and planners of the court rather than by the people who set chisel to stone. I graphically laid out this formulation (fig. 11) in an attempt to revise the prevailing scholarly mindset, which discounted the role of the Achaemenids themselves in the creation of art meant to represent them and focused instead on the notion of foreign (especially Greek) artists as the driving creative force. I attempted to demonstrate the historical plausibility of viewing the Achaemenid kings as involved patrons directly concerned with the formulation of their dynastic image. And I presented a scenario in which the Persian king would have deliberately exploited the talents and acumen of well-chosen advisors, both Persian and non-Persian, in the planning of the iconographical

Fig. 11. Diagram showing process of creation of Achaemenid art. From M. C. Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art* (Leiden 1979) fig. 1.



program that Persepolis now epitomizes. The chart remains useful in its attempt to place the Achaemenid king and his court at the center of a web of factors relating to long-term cultural and historical influences. But in another respect the chart now seems too simple. It does not adequately suggest an interactive relationship between the patron, the plan, and the artists/artisans. Although in the accompanying text I presented evidence for interaction between Near Eastern kings and the artists executing their court art, this nuance drops out in the chart formula. The reason for this oversimplification must be that in my emphasis on the *iconographical* program, I focused on the art as an almost exclusively intellectual formulation rather than one that also demanded technical and aesthetic problem-solving in concert with the symbolic ordering of the whole.

I still maintain that, in terms of the burden of creative responsibility for the iconographical program, the king and his circle of advisors were central. The hundreds of stone carvers working at Persepolis were not the creators of that monumental art. Michael Roaf's important study of sculptural relief production at Persepolis, based on masons' marks and detailed tabulation of drafting idiosyncracies, reinforces the theory of assembly-line work in the building of Persepolis.⁴⁰ But somewhere between patron and sculptural piecework, a significant role was played by artists of great talent. New perspectives in the artistic environment at Persepolis are emerging that may enable us to penetrate the circle in which creative experiment translated ideas into forms that could be applied by teams of workers in various media. The selective discussion of Persepolis I presented in the first section of this article is meant to suggest some ways of approaching its program as a complex evocative art, an art conditioned by interlocking features of form and symbolism. This interlocking implies a coordinated effort of ideologically motivated planners and aesthetically/technically astute practitioners. It implies a marriage of ideas and of formal resolutions, both rooted in an understanding of the ancient traditions siphoned into the Achaemenid court environment.

Guitty Azarpay's study of the proportional guidelines of ancient Near Eastern art offers an illuminating perspective on the problem of creative process.⁴¹ She has demonstrated the descent of Achaemenid glazed brick relief from both Elamite and Mesopotamian traditions. Her analysis implicitly shows that modes of practical (read "artistic") formulation of visual ideas at the Persian court, no matter how intellectualized their message, obeyed certain principles of presentation. Those principles were based upon the artist's craft-oriented concepts at least as much as they were based upon the patron's ideological needs. Probably those craft-oriented concepts were also craft-dominated ones. This is an important point for our discussion.

At what point in the creation of the Achaemenid program did ideologically motivated mandates of message join with formal expression of those mandates? Azarpay's work suggests that certain basic notions of representation—ones that we tend to consider critical elements of message-conveyance—were actually imbedded in the *craft-based* artistic environment of the Achaemenid court. Such concepts include internal figural proportions and status-differential through relative figural scale. A plausible implication of this scenario would interpret the proportional canon as an index of continuity in craft knowledge, unencumbered by symbolic

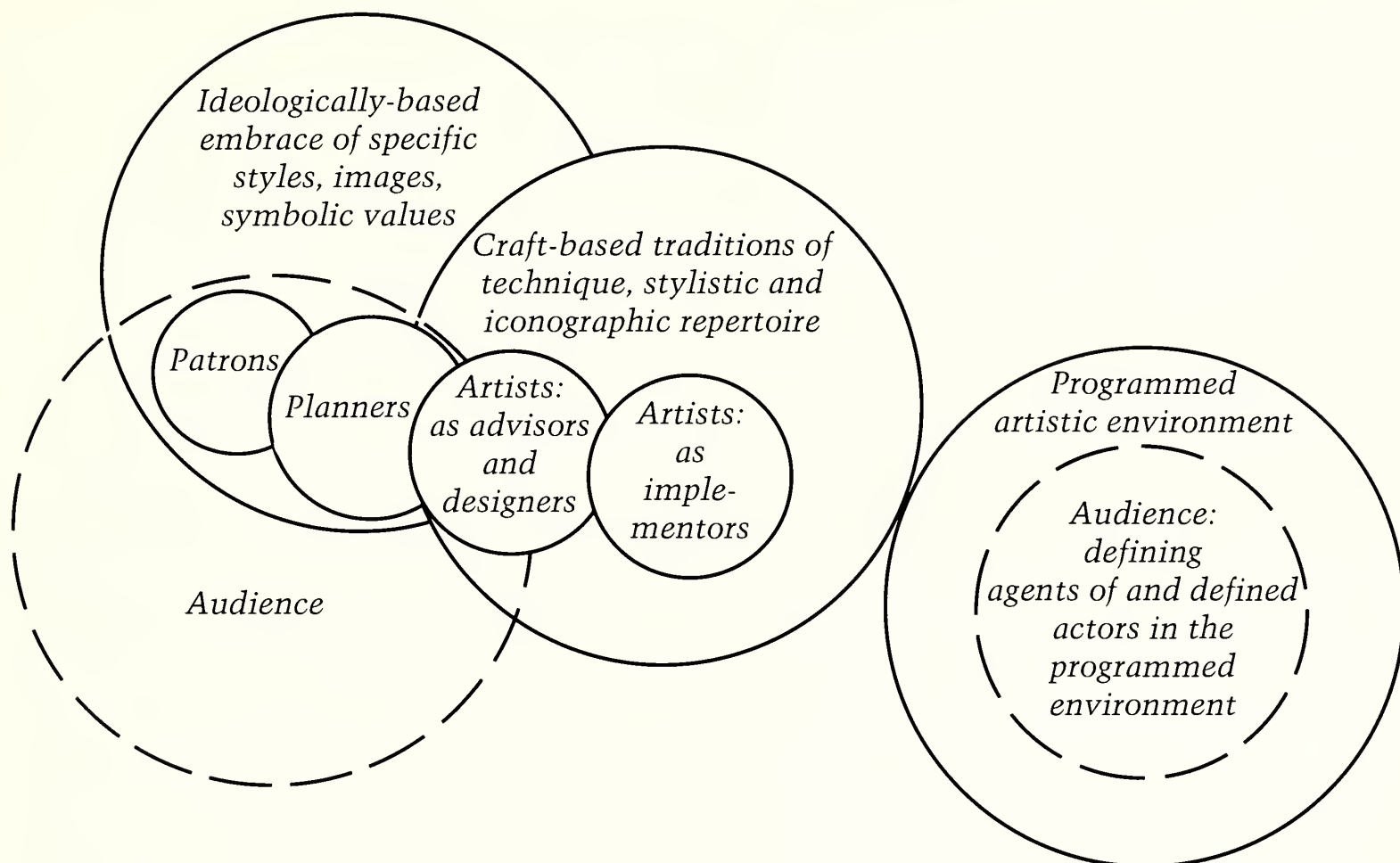


Fig. 12. Diagram showing circles of creative interaction in the formation and reception of the programmed artistic environment at Persepolis.

directives and historical allusions mandated by the patron. In theory, this important aspect might, on the other hand, have been a reflection of antiquarian investigation on the part of the imperial patron. In other words, the imperial use of proportional guidelines stemming from earlier Near Eastern traditions could conceivably have been a technical archaism meant to express a specific relation to the past. Probably it is safest to avoid a rigid dichotomy between these two possibilities.

In considering a new graphic model for the interaction experienced in the creation of an artistic program (fig. 12), I propose intersecting circles to represent the relationship between artists' conceptualizing and working processes, their storehouses of technical/aesthetic solutions to challenges of representation, and their potential to match a technique or subject from these storehouses to satisfy a specific patron demand. The intersection of other circles postulates a somewhat fluid relationship between the specific mandates of message laid down by the patron and the options for representational solutions proposed and applied within the realm of the artist. These overlapping circles may best represent the patron-planner-artist system and the blending of distinctions necessary, especially when we discuss the link between "planners/advisors" and "artists."⁴²

Again, Azarpay's analysis offers assistance. She has observed that the colossal stone statue of Darius—which was made in Egypt of Egyptian stone and which adapted Egyptian iconography to a Persian message—follows the Achaemenid system of figural proportion derived from Mesopotamian/Elamite tradition, rather than the Saite Egyptian canon.⁴³ This prompts us to question generally held assumptions concerning how a work of art reveals the ethnic identity of the craftsman. We

might think that the application of a particular canon of proportion would be just the type of procedural decision left by the patron to the artist's discretion.⁴⁴ Yet that was clearly not the case for the Darius statue. If this statue was made in Egypt by *Egyptians*, the native sculptors must have obeyed instructions to work according to a concept of the human figure radically different from the traditional Egyptian one. This flexibility of the artist to work convincingly in foreign modalities does not trouble me. But it does pose a problem for some scholars of Achaemenid art who maintain that the ethnicity of the participants in the patron-planner-artist system determined the resulting work of art.⁴⁵

The text of the Cyrus Cylinder composed for Cyrus the Great at Babylon may be a helpful analogy for understanding the overlapping circles of patron, planner, and artist. The cylinder's text refers to Cyrus's works at Babylon as historical parallels to the acts at Babylon of his Neo-Assyrian predecessor, Ashurbanipal. J. Harmatta has studied the ways in which the language of the Achaemenid text is based upon models derived specifically from Ashurbanipal's texts at Babylon—which were themselves archaizing.⁴⁶ The point is this: Somewhere between Cyrus's notion of his place in Babylonian history and the material evidence of the Cyrus Cylinder was an interaction that probably involved priests, informed archival consultation, and the labor of a scribe (who was not necessarily one of the priests involved in the planning stage). Since scribes learned their craft by copying texts of various genres and periods, it is safe to suggest that *consciously selective*, patron-mandated use of an antique (or foreign) idiom was not dichotomous with the concept of *continuity* in the craft tradition.⁴⁷ Rather, the ability to imitate and to make allusion (on demand) to formal precedents was a critical goal of the scribe's education. This goal simultaneously reflected and reinforced larger societal interests. A similar scenario must be supposed for practitioners of the visual arts.⁴⁸

Returning more specifically to Persepolis and to my model of overlapping circles, we need to characterize the creative system so that it provides for significant shared experience between the categories of artist as advisor and artist as implementer. Only in this way can we begin to deal with the concept of the program as an integrated network.

The seal impressions on the Persepolis Fortification tablets offer significant glimpses of the complexities we must be dealing with in the context of such patron-planner-artist networks in the Achaemenid Empire.⁴⁹ The seal used in 499 B.C. by Gobryas, a close friend of Darius, suggests by its superior quality alone the product of a direct commission (fig. 13).⁵⁰ It implies that Gobryas and his seal carver participated in a dialogue whose result is not a typical example of what we have come to call Achaemenid court style in seals. Instead, the seal is a rather remarkable and distinctive piece resolving Near Eastern and seemingly Greek visual forms into a unique creation, one which conforms neither to the court style nor to the problematic category of "Graeco-Persian."⁵¹ This is interesting in the present context because Gobryas was just the sort of Persian aristocrat who is likely to have worked with Darius, as Agrippa with Augustus Caesar, to establish the creative background for the Achaemenid program and its "court style" that Darius ultimately achieved.

Another instructive seal in this regard is that owned and used by Parnaka, the head officer of the Persepolis bureaucracy (fig. 14). This exquisite seal was made in



Fig. 13. Impression of stamp seal of Gobryas, Seal 857 on Persepolis Fortification tablet 688. Width of sealed surface 4.5 cm.



Fig. 14. Impression of seal of Parnaka, Seal 16 on Persepolis Fortification tablet 655. Width of sealed surface 3.8 cm.



Fig. 15. Impression of cylinder seal, Seal 3 on Persepolis Fortification tablet 869. Width of sealed surface 4.0 cm.

500 B.C. as a replacement for a lost one.⁵² It is carved in a vigorous, aggressively muscled Assyrianizing style reminiscent of the orthostat reliefs of Ashurbanipal.⁵³ The use of Parnaka's Aramaic name in the inscription bespeaks a personal seal of this important courtier. Here, the exercise of the patron's discretion resulted in the adaptation of a rather different set of antique and foreign models from that selected by Gobryas.

One final example of a non-court-style seal used by the court at Persepolis is Seal 3: a cylinder that was an office seal rather than a personal possession of a particular official (fig. 15).⁵⁴ This seal was used to ratify disbursements of food to animals. This fact certainly tempts us to see the iconography as the result of a deliberate choice meant to suit the official context. Even the partially preserved impressions reveal that Seal 3 is an elegantly composed and executed work of art, related to Neo-Elamite stylistic and iconographical traditions. This link is especially evident in the full, smooth modeling and the graceful contours of the animals as well as in their emblematic posture. Elamite traditions must have maintained themselves alive and well both within the working vocabulary of seal carvers in the Persepolitan milieu and within the referencing framework of forms considered by court patrons as desirable.⁵⁵ This should come as no surprise, since Elamite scribal traditions were maintained at Persepolis also. One element of Seal 3 commands our attention, however, as apparently intrusive within the otherwise Elamite-looking work of art: the dotted circle enclosing the motif of crossed animals. The motif of animals

enclosed within a round frame has an interesting, if only sporadically documented, history within ancient Near Eastern art. And the use of this on Seal 3 may relate to that tradition. But the precise dotted form of the circle relates directly and explicitly to the Western coin motif of a dotted circle border around the device. Thus, Seal 3 suggests some cross-fertilization between the emergent traditions of Western coin die cutters and the ancient traditions of Near Eastern seal carvers in the designing of one particular and important official Achaemenid court seal.

The repertoire documented by the Fortification tablet sealings shows that the “court style” in seals, so called because it is most closely akin to the style of the Persepolis reliefs, was not the only style of the court. The seals hint intimately at the importance of imbedded workshop traditions within the artistic environment at Persepolis, and they emphasize the significance of patron choice. Perhaps most important, the seals suggest the range of intercultural synthesis achieved in the Achaemenid workshops.

Mark Garrison’s work on the Fortification seal impressions is opening up a new realm of inquiry into the artistic environment of Persepolis. Focusing on the impressions whose theme is heroic encounter, he has traced the hands of individual artists and clusters or workshops of artists producing seals used in the Persepolis environs. For the first time in the study of ancient Near Eastern art, we have the opportunity to feel connected, through an extensive corpus, to artists in the throes of formulating representational and stylistic modalities to suit a particular political/social context defined ultimately by the elite patron.⁵⁶ Moreover, because the tablets ratified by the seals are usually dated, Garrison is able to document rather precise *termini ante quem* for stages of artistic experimentation that lead eventually to the canonized “court style” of Achaemenid glyptic art. This style relates closely not only to monumental forms at Persepolis and elsewhere, but also to representational forms depicted on metal vessels and on jewelry.⁵⁷

It is Garrison’s hard-earned prerogative to explain this pioneering study in detail. However, I must stress here that Garrison demonstrates conclusively that Achaemenid glyptic “court style” derived from a base of conceptualization and production that is deeply lodged in the rich and varied workshop traditions of the Mesopotamian-Elamite sphere. We are not yet able to assess the extent to which seal carvers may also have worked as carvers of sculpture at Persepolis and perhaps as fashioners of representational metalwork.⁵⁸ It does seem plausible, however, that glyptic art performed a pivotal function during the political upheavals and realignments of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., which led to the fall of Elam, Assyria, Media, Babylonia, and Lydia as independent powers. Political/military subjugation did not mean the death of local cultures. Seal workshops surely were vital to the perpetuation and resurgence of representational traditions for a Near Eastern imperial context. However the dialogue progressed between Darius, his court planners, and his artists, it seems likely that glyptic tradition spoke powerfully from the center of all three circles. Ultimately, a systematic comparison of the glyptic and the monumental “court style” will be essential in order to explore the nature of the style’s cohesiveness.⁵⁹

The Fortification seals reveal that patronage at the court was not subservient to a royal dictum on the use of this official “court style.” Individual patrons could

commission seals that reflected their own predilections and experiences, and in commissioning such seals, the patrons could rely upon artists who had at their disposal a rich repertoire of accumulated possibilities for the enactment of patron preference.

At this juncture, the concept of "taste" becomes important. Trudy Kawami has recently written an informative and provocative article about "taste" in the art of Persepolis, with reference to some of the freestanding animal sculptures excavated there.⁶⁰ She has suggested a stylistic dichotomy between these animal statues and the animal figures carved in relief at Persepolis, characterizing the freestanding statues as having a "smooth, simple style devoid of ornate detail." She describes this style as Greek and proposes that the statues must have been created by Greek artists. Telephanes of Phocaea is specifically proposed as carver of the bull statues. In contrast, she characterizes the animals carved in relief as having "flatter, more richly carved surfaces" that presumably do not reflect Greek workmanship. The supposedly Greek style of the animal statues is then taken to reflect the real "taste" of the Persian elite, and the style of the architectural sculptures, on the other hand, is taken to reflect an artificially imposed and non-resonating form of expression. I do not wish to offer a point-by-point commentary on Kawami's article, although I have a very different analysis of the pedigrees of the Persepolis animal sculptures in relation to the reliefs. I want, instead, to focus on two issues of methodology. First, I protest the mode of analysis that studies Persepolitan style in order to attribute a work of Achaemenid art to the hand of a specific Greek sculptor who is known to us *only as a name in a classical text*. As an approach to stylistic analysis it has the unintended effect of deflecting attention from careful scrutiny of the intricacies of the art as art and of creating a misleading impression of the significance of the artist as personality within the milieu of Persepolis and the ancient Near East more generally.

Probably we will never know the actual names of any of Garrison's identified artistic hands in the seal workshops. This hardly comes as a surprise, since there seems to have been no premium placed upon the documentation of the artist as celebrity in the ancient Near East. For posterity, it was the identity of patron and audience (often ostensibly divine) that mattered. Nevertheless, anonymous to us or not, these seal carvers were actual working artists at the site. Their personal testimony is tangible through their art rather than through their names within the creative activity at the heartland capital. Garrison's study of individual styles will enable us ultimately to link specific glyptic masters to private patrons whose names (and, by implication, status) appear as users/owners on the tablets. This is a fruitful, artist-oriented approach to seeing where the circles of patronage and production intersect. Garrison's method breaks new ground because it allows the art itself to speak.

The second methodological issue raised by Kawami's article relates to the assumption that, when given a choice, the elite Persian patron would naturally have preferred to commission a work in Greek style produced by a (presumably famous) Greek artist. Evidence from the Fortification seal impressions has begun to demonstrate that elite Persian patrons did indeed value styles emanating from the Near Eastern milieu. They also commissioned work reflecting sophisticated stylistic koines that were neither wholly Greek nor wholly Oriental.

Persepolis: The Program and Its Performance

In closing I want to discuss the problem of audience addressed by the art of Persepolis. The “court style,” as we have seen, seems to have been developed in the Persepolis environs. It must have been devised specifically to answer a perceived need for a style expressive of the official imperial ideology. This ideology stressed unity out of diversity, cooperation, and ecumenical harmony among peoples of a vast polyglot empire. Thus, the style created to epitomize the ideology in visual terms incorporates strands of several great cultures. Like the peoples of the empire, the artistic traditions embraced by the imperial program were vital. Out of these living traditions, the king, as ultimate patron at Persepolis, commissioned a program that reflected his own worldview and provided the formal setting for his own experience. But Persepolis was also meant to address a wider audience. It was calculated not only to reflect but also to assert an ideology. Persepolis was an environment calculated by its imperial patron to induce responses among peoples of the empire from near and far. All this was accomplished by a program that partook of essential qualities of artistic traditions that were not moribund, but which had active and immediate associations.⁶¹

The king expected the site to be visited by courtiers, ambassadors, and other travelers—and it was.⁶² It must have been the focal point of great pomp and ceremony. The Achaemenid Empire, after all, provided the historical link between earlier Near Eastern and Egyptian ceremonials of kingship and cult, and the lavish processions of Hellenistic and Roman date.⁶³ The architecture and sculpture at the site lived as a landscape for court activity—a programmed landscape to which visitors brought their individual reactions. To subjects from peripheral regions, there must have been something intensely multivalent about the ecumenicalism and the echoing patterns of this program. It must have suggested to such visitors aspects of the familiar, the known, and, therefore, the safe. Simultaneously, however, it may have exuded an elusive quality of alien (perhaps latently threatening) power in its subtle and systematic acquisitions and reconstitutions of elements from the conquered lands. Together, this does not add up to “boring” or “deadly.” Rather, it is one important piece of the intricate puzzle of Achaemenid imperial authority: one manifestation of complex interdependence between an energetically centralized power and a coexistent policy of subsidiary power relationships that encouraged a certain form of cultural polycentrism.⁶⁴

The peoples from lands of the empire were, in effect, part of the program as well as part of the audience. So was the king. The Persepolis citadel, like the ceremonial quarters of other capitals before and after, functioned as a stage. There would have been music, rhetoric, liturgy, protocol, political jockeying, props, costumes, and participants all serving the enactment of imperial observance. Within the Achaemenid context, much of this pageantry is beyond our specific grasp. But historical considerations invite—indeed, beg—us to remember the contextual drama and ritual splendor that was once an integral part of the art that we are now forced to study as static form. Because our sources are rather meager for the Achaemenid period, it is helpful to read widely on other cultural milieus in order to attempt to understand the active aspect of art and architecture as a backdrop for the artful actuality common to settings of power and cult.⁶⁵

Persepolis remains a puzzling capital city in more ways than I could discuss here. What we have explored in terms of creative process at the site does, however, have a familiar ring to it, especially from the immediate vantage point of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution. The circles of artistic programming at Persepolis are visible manifestations of a certain ideology of acquired historical, cultural, and territorial dominion that was expressed officially and also (in variant modalities) in the art of privileged individuals: *e pluribus unum*.

I wish to thank Dr. Ann Gunter for conceiving of this symposium on artistic environment and for carrying her ideas forward so insightfully and graciously. My thanks also go to Dr. Milo Beach, Director, and to the staff of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. And finally, I wish to express special appreciation to Mrs. Arthur M. Sackler, whose generosity supported the symposium and whose presence there was a meaningful part of the gathering.

Notes

1. The archaeology of Persepolis is recorded principally in the following: E. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, Vols. I–III, OIP 68–70 (Chicago 1953, 1957, 1970); F. Krefter, *Persepolis Rekonstruktionen*, *Teheraner Forschungen* III (Berlin 1971); A. B. Tilia, *Studies and Restorations at Persepolis and Other Sites of Fārs* I–II, IsMEO Reports and Memoirs XVI and XVIII (Rome 1972 and 1978).
2. E.g., H. Frankfort, "Achaemenian Sculpture," *AJA* 50 (1946) 11.
3. The many contributions in *Achaemenid History* I–III, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (Leiden 1987–88), discuss the historiographic problems of studying Achaemenid society.
4. A. B. Tilia, "Recent Discoveries at Persepolis," *AJA* 81 (1977) 67–77, for the royal residence in the plain; N. Cahill, "The Treasury at Persepolis: Gift-giving at the City of the Persians," *AJA* 89 (1985) 373–89, for a recent functional analysis of the Treasury and its relation to activities that must have taken place on the citadel.
5. Schmidt (supra n. 1, Vol. I) 64. Even though ring walls may have protected residences in the plain, the distant view would have been imposing.
6. In this regard, Persepolis is an extension of more ancient Mesopotamian traditions. See M. Liverani, "The Ideology of Assyrian Power," in M. T. Larsen, ed., *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, *Mesopotamia* 7 (Copenhagen 1979) 309–14. I addressed the importance of imperial centeredness in the conceptualization of Persepolis in "The Persian Archer at Persepolis: Aspects of Chronology, Style, and Symbolism," in R. Descat, ed., *L'or perse et l'histoire grecque*, *REA*, forthcoming.
7. W. M. Sumner, "Achaemenid Settlement in the Persepolis Plain," *AJA* 90 (1986) 3–31.
8. Tilia discusses evidence for subsidiary service entrances to the citadel (supra n. 1, Vol. II) 13–18.
9. S. Sinding-Larsen provides a very interesting discussion on spatial relationships in ecclesiastical architecture that provide the participant with critical cues for the practice of liturgy within the designated architectural space; *Iconography and Ritual: A Study of Analytical Perspectives* (Oslo 1984) esp. 88–94.
10. The Mesopotamian cultic associations of the Persepolis stairways are noted also by I. Luschey-Schmeisser, "Nachleben und Wiederaufnahme achämenidischer Elemente in der späteren Kunst Irans," in H. Koch and D. N. Mackenzie, eds., *Kunst, Kultur, und Geschichte der Achämenidenzeit und ihr Fortleben*, *AMIran*, Supp. 10 (Berlin 1983) 267. An example of the Egyptian image of ascent toward judgment by Osiris is illustrated in E.

Hornung, *Das Grab des Haremhab im Tal der Könige* (Bern 1971) fig. 41.

11. My thinking about these issues is still admittedly preliminary. I have gained useful insights into some questions through the following: B. Hillier and J. Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space* (Cambridge 1984) and Robert D. Sack, *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought: A Geographic Perspective* (London 1980). The quality of tensional space in ancient Mesopotamian representational art (as opposed to architecture) has been discussed by H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement* (London 1951) e.g., 145–56, on “dynamic space” and related concepts.
12. R. Arnheim addresses the effects of inhibiting access to a space in *The Dynamics of Architectural Form* (Berkeley 1977). On pp. 158–59, he discusses temporary retardation; on p. 157, the dynamic of the constricted path.
13. E.g., S. Gideion, *Space, Time, and Architecture*, 5th ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1967) 59–71.
14. C. Nylander, *Ionians in Pasargadae: Studies in Old Persian Architecture* (Uppsala 1970) 75–91.
15. Schmidt (supra n. 1, Vol. I) 62–63, provides the Cameron translation of this Elamite version of the DPF text.
16. Tilia (supra n. 1, Vol. II) 3–27 provides a preliminary survey of the archaeological data. This work is of major importance as a presentation of meticulous observations made at the site. It does not intend, however, to be richly interpretive or far-reaching in its discussion of the problem of historical relationships.
17. I am convinced that this concept is not farfetched within the ancient Near Eastern milieu. On abstract conceptualizations of mapping in the ancient Near East and in Egypt, see A. R. Millard, “Cartography in the Ancient Near East,” and A. F. Shore, “Egyptian Cartography,” in J. B. Harley and D. Woodward, eds., *The History of Cartography*, Vol. I (Chicago 1987) 107–16 and 117–29 respectively. P. Michalowski presents a particular case study in Mesopotamia in “Mental Maps and Ideology: Reflections on Subartu,” in H. Weiss, ed., *The Origins of Cities in Dry Farming Syria and Mesopotamia in the Third Millennium B.C.* (Guilford, Conn., 1987) 129–56. I have written about some aspects of mapping metaphor in the ancient Near East as well, particularly in the Persepolis context (supra n. 6). For later periods and cultural environments, discussions of maps and mapping notions as power-laden metaphors are more prevalent. Note, for instance, J. B. Harley, “Maps, Knowledge, and Power,” in D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels, eds., *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge 1988) 277–312, and S. Alpers, *The Art of Describing* (Chicago 1983).
18. R. G. Kent, *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon* (New Haven 1950) 120.
19. Kent (supra n. 18) 142.
20. Schmidt (supra n. 1, Vol. I) 63.
21. Kent (supra n. 18) 138.
22. M. C. Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire*, *Acta Iranica* 19 (Leiden 1979) 72–76 and 131–61.
23. The importance of text to ancient art scholars can be seen in many discussions, such as T. S. Kawami, “Greek Art and Persian Taste: Some Animal Sculptures from Persepolis,” *AJA* 90 (1986) 264: “The patron who commissioned the Persepolis bull is presumed to be royal, but without written evidence we can assume little more about him than eclectic taste. . . . Without written evidence we cannot know the motives behind such choices.”
24. Such a distinction emerged in the published dialogue between W. Hood and B. S. Ridgway in *ArtB* 68 (1986) 480–82.
25. R. Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception* (Berkeley 1974) 454.
26. Kent (supra n. 18) 148.
27. M. Giovino, a graduate student in Near Eastern studies at the University of Michigan, is currently attempting to analyze the Persepolis gatehouse from many angles. She will study the related Mesopotamian tradition of metaphorical nomenclature, its formal prototypes, and the ambiguous concepts of inclusion/exclusion inherent in such gate monuments.
28. Root (supra n. 6) and *Persia and the Parthenon: Essays on the Art of Emulation* (forthcoming).
29. M. Wheeler, *Flames over Persepolis* (London 1968) 56 and 58.

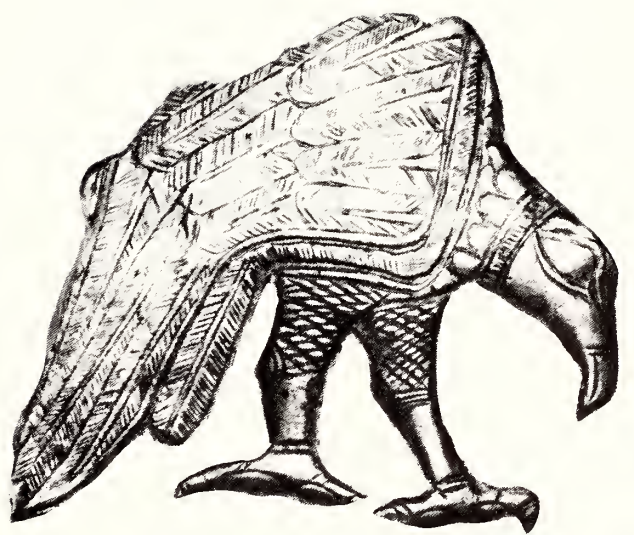
30. Root (supra n. 22) 226–84 and “The Parthenon Frieze and the Apadana Reliefs at Persepolis: Reassessing a Programmatic Relationship,” *AJA* 89 (1985) 103–20.
31. Frankfort (supra n. 2) 12.
32. A classic study in the concept of liminality is A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (Chicago 1960) esp. 15–25. Recent discussions of liminality in relation to antiquity have included W. B. Tyrell, *Amazons: A Study in Athenian Myth-making* (Baltimore 1984) 45–49 and 64–76, where the loaded concepts of inclusion/exclusion and interior/exterior are related particularly to issues of the power relationship of male to female and hence of ruler to subject. Root (supra n. 28) offers a more comprehensive commentary on related issues concerning the Persepolis reliefs.
33. E. Porada has made sensitive observations about the integration of naturalistic and abstract forms in Achaemenid relief sculpture: *The Art of Ancient Iran* (New York 1965) 156–58.
34. Root (supra n. 22) 303–8.
35. The anthology of articles by M. Schapiro on Romanesque art provides rich models: *Romanesque Art* (New York 1977). Schapiro’s “A Relief in Rodez and the Beginnings of Romanesque Sculpture in Southern France,” 285–305, first published in 1963, demonstrates the potentials of excursion into true formal visual analysis in the search for imbedded meaning.
36. M. Schapiro discusses such issues in “Style,” in S. Tax, ed., *Anthropology Today* (Chicago 1962) 278–303. H. S. Becker writes about problems of collective enterprise in *Art Worlds* (Berkeley 1982) esp. 28–39 and 55–61. Ann Gunter refers to many relevant studies of medieval art in her contribution to this volume. The need for recourse to cultural analogues specifically related to the study of sculptural teams producing the Persepolis reliefs is noted in my review of M. Roaf, *Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis, Iran* 21 (London 1983), in *AJA* 90 (1986) 113–14.
37. G. Azarpay, “Proportional Guidelines in Ancient Near Eastern Art,” *JNES* 46 (1987) 189–90.
38. Kent (supra n. 18) 140.
39. George Kubler aptly writes on the aesthetic and symbolic importance of repetitive convention in the visual arts in *The Shape of Time* (New Haven 1962) esp. 62–82. W. J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London 1982) 35, discusses the heavy language patterning (with many fixed and repeated formulas) that is characteristic of oral presentation in nonliterate and archaic literate societies.
40. Roaf (supra n. 36).
41. Azarpay (supra n. 37) 198–202.
42. Again, readings about other periods/cultures may be helpful. For better-documented milieus it seems that the circles of programming slide back and forth in their overlappings. Note, for instance, Sinding-Larsen (supra n. 9) esp. 111–14, on difficulties of disengaging patron, planner, artist, and audience. M. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, 2d ed. (Oxford 1972), provides a case study in exploration of textual and visual documentation of patron/planner/artist roles. On the complex problem of sorting out roles of inventive artists versus production-line workers in the totality of the process of artistic creation at Persepolis, my opinion (supra n. 36) diverges with M. Roaf. Becker, Kubler (supra n. 39), and Baxandall (supra n. 42) supply relevant commentary on other environments.
43. Root (supra n. 22) 131–61, on the iconography of the statue with supporting figures of the conquered peoples below the king. Azarpay (supra n. 37) 190.
44. Nylander suggests this (supra n. 14) 17.
45. In particular, this approach has aggravated the difficulties of dealing with “Graeco-Persian” art (especially glyptic). See M. C. Root, “From the Heart: A Working Paper on the Question of Achaemenid Persian Cultural Presence in the Western Empire,” in H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt, eds., *Achaemenid History*, Vol. VI (Leiden forthcoming) for a survey of issues.
46. J. Harmatta, “Les modèles littéraires de l’édit babylonien de Cyrus,” *Acta Iranica* 1 (Leiden 1974) 29–44; Root (supra n. 22) 217–18.

47. A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, rev. ed. by E. Reiner (Chicago 1977) 235–49.
48. Root (supra n. 22) 23–28, on conscious selection and artistic training in the ancient Near East. In an environment in which most artists were probably illiterate, they were perhaps particularly capable of storing rich visual memories. Ong remarks on this (supra n. 39) 43.
49. The tablets in this archive of administrative records in Elamite are dated between 509 and 494 B.C. and thus coincide with the period of formative creative activity at Persepolis. R. T. Hallock discusses the texts inscribed on the tablets in *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (Chicago 1969), and he writes on selected Fortification tablet seal impressions in relation to the texts in “The Use of Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets,” in R. D. Biggs and M. Gibson, eds., *Seals and Sealing in the Ancient Near East*, Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 6 (Malibu 1977) 127–33. W. Hinz also addresses selected seal impressions in “Achämenidische Hofverwaltung,” *ZA* 61 (1971) 260–311. M. B. Garrison and I are collaborating on the publication of a catalogue of the approximately 1,400 seals used on the Fortification tablets whose texts were published by Hallock in 1969.
50. The Gobryas seal occurs only on tablet no. 688 (with Root and Garrison seal no. 857). Hallock (supra n. 49, 1977) 129.
51. A preliminary discussion of the Gobryas seal, emerging out of my seminar at the University of Michigan, was presented by G. Hoffman at a thematic session entitled “Defining Modes of Influence: Artistic Relations between Greece and the Near East” for the College Art Association in 1985. Hoffman has chosen not to publish this work. See my more recent analysis, with comparanda, which diverges from Hoffman’s conclusions but benefits much from her earlier work (supra n. 45).
52. Hallock (supra n. 49, 1977) 128.
53. M. B. Garrison, *Seal Workshops and Artists in Persepolis: A Study of Seal Impressions Preserving the Theme of Heroic Encounter on the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Tablets* (Diss. Univ. of Michigan 1988) esp. 216–22 on the style of Seal 16 and its relation to Garrison’s Group 2 of the Modeled Style.
54. Hallock (supra n. 49, 1977) 129–31.
55. P. Amiet, “La glyptique de la fin d’Elam,” *Arts Asiatiques* 28 (1973) 3–32, and Root (supra n. 45).
56. Garrison (supra n. 53). D. Collon, *First Impressions: Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago 1987) 102–4, surveys previous attempts to isolate the hands of individual seal carvers.
57. Porada (supra n. 33) 162–78, provides a brief overview of material commonly held to define the “court style” in Achaemenid portable arts.
58. Collon (supra n. 56) 102–3, summarizes what little direct evidence we have on the degree to which seal carvers were considered specialists in that art form. E. Porada’s commentary is especially valuable on the range of meanings documented in texts for *purkullu*, embracing not only the seal carver but also the carver of stone reliefs and stone vessels and the embosser of metal architectural revetments; “Of Professional Seal Cutters and Nonprofessionally Made Seals,” in Biggs and Gibson, eds. (supra n. 49) 7–14. Note, in this context, the remarks contained throughout M. F. Hearn’s *Romanesque Sculpture* (Ithaca 1981) on the question of interchange between media in medieval art.
59. Garrison hopes to attempt this type of close comparative stylistic analysis between the monumental sculptures and the Fortification and Treasury seal impressions. It is difficult to suggest what is likely to emerge from such a study. Garrison’s hand attributions of the seal impressions are based on the implicit postulation that individual elements of an entire seal design (if not necessarily the design in its entirety of isolated forms) were carved by individual seal cutters. His attributions are absolutely convincing in their presentation of a scenario of an individual master working alone on a series of seals. Roaf (supra n. 36) and Tilia (supra n. 1, Vol. I) have, however, demonstrated the piece-work method of carving employed on the reliefs—presumably on the basis of precise models.
60. Kawami (supra n. 23). S. Tepaske-King, a graduate student in art history at the University of Michigan, is currently reassessing the animal sculptures at Persepolis.

61. In the terms established by Kubler (supra n. 39), we would be entitled to say that the program at Persepolis did *not* exhibit “aesthetic fatigue.” It was a remarkable combination of conventional and inventive elements that is likely to have created a provocative rather than a deadly environment.
62. Root (supra n. 30, 1985) 116–18, for a critique of the traditional assumption that Persepolis was “hidden away” from non-Persians. Elaborations on this discussion will appear in Root (supra n. 28, *Persia and the Parthenon*).
63. The extravaganza of Ptolemy Philadelphus in the early third century B.C. is not far removed in time from the fall of the Achaemenid Empire in Egypt. The description of the great procession even includes allegorical figures relating explicitly to the conquests of the Achaemenids. E. E. Rice addresses this in *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Oxford 1983). For the Achaemenid period itself, our evidence for imperial cult and ceremonial is not so detailed. But between the suggestions implicit in the visual art, the commentaries of classical authors, and evidence for such activities both before and after the empire, we are in a good position to acknowledge that Persepolis must have been alive with ceremony! Good reading on the before and after is found in E. Cassin, *La splendeur divine* (Paris 1968) and E. H. Kantorowicz, “Oriens Augusti—Lever du roi,” *DOP* 17 (1963) 119–77.
64. P. Briant provides important analysis in “Pouvoir central et polycentrisme culturel dans l’empire achéménide,” in H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, ed. (supra n. 3, Vol. I) 1–31.
65. Unfortunately, the art of Persepolis has been plagued by a tendency to view the reliefs as precise illustrations of ceremonies that could have taken place exactly as and where they are depicted on the architecture. C. Nylander critiques this approach in “Al-Beruni and Persepolis,” *Acta Iranica* 1 (Leiden 1974) 137–50. Elsewhere (supra n. 22) 153–61, 263–67, and *passim*, I have attempted to suggest a delicate balance between the art as indication of actual ceremonies and the art as elaborate imperial metaphor couched in terms of ceremonies. Surely there was an important interplay between the two as H. Gabelmann suggests in *Antike Audienz- und Tribunalszenen* (Darmstadt 1984) 7–22. Interesting analyses of earlier Near Eastern traditions have postulated intricate connections between representational program and the inspiration of actual rituals: E. D. van Buren, “Religious Rites and Ritual in the Time of Uruk IV–III,” *AfO* 13 (1939–41) 32–45; M. Th. Barrelet, “Étude de glyptique akkadienne: L’imagination figurative et le cycle d’Ea,” *Orientalia* 39 (1970) 213–51. S. R. F. Price put it neatly when he wrote that in antiquity, “ritual is what there was”; *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1986) 11. For more recent times see, for instance, R. Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450–1650* (Berkeley 1984). This brings us full circle—back to the magnificent double staircase leading up to the stagelike citadel at Persepolis. The site has much to offer as a muted harbinger of the palatial settings of aspirational ascent and imperial harmony at the courts of the Renaissance.

PART IV

COMMENTARY



Historical Perspectives on Artistic Environments

Dieter Metzler

A COMMENTARY CAN ONLY BE ONE COMMENT OUT OF A RATHER large range of possible remarks—it never exhausts the complexity of the information provided by eminent specialists in their respective fields. Therefore, one can only look from a rather individual and subjective point of view on the material under discussion; in my own case, with the eyes of a would-be universalist grown up as a classicist, acquainted with the ancient Near East only as far—or as near—as the Achaemenid empire. But my informal remarks can at least give an idea of how one individual may distill the diversity of experience and specialized knowledge, while also preserving the different approaches of specialists to a given topic. The clear instructions of the organizer and the discipline and insight of the contributors have greatly simplified my task. A dozen different papers all point to the same problem of the creation and perception of works of art in the ancient Near East. I should say so-called works of art, since the objects, the modes of their production, and their meaning, which have been discussed here, became works of art in a modern sense precisely in the environment of museums and galleries like the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, where my distinguished colleagues and myself have had the honor to be generously treated as guests.

The crucial issue, which was not a problem in the ancient Near East, is this: How can we define a concept of art appropriate to the ancient Near East? It may be superfluous to repeat the old observation, that art has not always been art. Greek and Renaissance art have rightly been quoted here for the remarkable liberation of art in its own right. But one should not generalize these events and regard them as a monolinear, irreversible evolution.

The contributions of Jack M. Sasson and Marie-Henriette Gates on documentary and archaeological evidence from Mari brought to my mind the *ancien régime* of the eighteenth century of our era. These cultures are linked by the common denominator of “court art.” *mārē ummêni* in Mari included artists as well as artisans, just as *demiourgoi* in Homeric Greece included the poet and seer as well as the doctor and carpenter. Similarly, the households of European nobles and princes included, for instance, musicians who, despite their acknowledged art, had to perform lower services at their master’s table when their higher or artistic services were not required. Earlier, Leonardo da Vinci was not only the creator of the Mona Lisa but also his master’s engineer—in this capacity, Leonardo was responsible for creating

amusing gadgets. Zimri-Lim of Mari and Ludovico Sforza of Milan would have understood each other, I believe, at least in questions of connoisseurship. On the other hand, one must naturally keep in mind that "court art" is not a timeless, ahistorical concept.

The standardization of measures, forms, motifs, and names for them, as Guitty Azarpay and Anne Kilmer show, developed in the ancient Near East in the workshops of palaces and temples in order to maintain a controlled high standard of quality as well as a remarkable artistic traditionalism. In modern times, these aims are usually associated with the regulation of guild-bound artisans in free cities, while ambitious princes could allow artists the freedom to create new forms of art. As Robert McC. Adams, Margaret Cool Root, and Ann C. Gunter emphasize, outstanding artistic creations had a style-building impact. This notion of artistic creation gained a new appreciation in ancient Greece during the evolution of a more or less democratic society at the turn from Archaic to Classical styles, when tradition and artisanal formulas no longer guided the production of works of art. Instead, the reference to nature (*physis*) produced not only a new paradigm but also hitherto unknown possibilities of artistic expression for generalization and individualization. Accompanied by a general surplus of theorizing, what was regarded as *physis* therefore allowed greater individual participation in the production and consumption of art.¹

My comparison of court art in the ancient Near East and in the eighteenth century may seem a little daring. The styles and iconographies of these two cultures are of course entirely different. But the contributors who discuss the artistic environment at Mari deliberate on the function and meaning of art; therefore, my comparison is not as presumptuous as it may appear. The absolute monarchy of the *ancien régime* relied in many ways on a perception of rulership and centralized government that has its roots in ancient models of statecraft. Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* and his verdict of "Oriental despotism" were not written for orientalists, but criticized the politics of his own time and country. German history demonstrates a similar reference to early notions of empire. The idea of the Four Monarchies, a concept of history originally developed in Achaemenid Persia, established continuity from Assyria, Media, Persia, and Rome; the Holy Roman Empire thus legitimated its status as successor to ancient Rome up until its formal end in 1806.² During the Middle Ages, the historical narrative of the sequence began with the mythical figure of Nimrod, the alleged first king. Around 1150, Gothofredus Viterbensis placed in his didactic *Mirror of Kings* a first chapter, just before the story of Nimrod, to explain "by what necessity kingship came into the world" (*qua necessitate in seculo rex factus est*).³ The year 1789 symbolizes a very special answer to this, since it was precisely during the French Revolution that the meaning of "court art" was changed: items of princely luxury and representation entered museums.⁴ Giving up their former context and function, these objects acquired new value as works of art in a "secular" environment, now becoming monuments to the artistic talent of the *menu peuple*. The spotlights in the vitrines of our contemporary galleries only obscure this insight from the Enlightenment, simulating the magic of an arrogated connoisseurship.

Jerrold S. Cooper and Piotr Michalowski have written about the self-representation of the ruler, the construction of historical images, and communication systems

as ideologies. I cannot summarize or comment extensively here on the far-reaching and stimulating observations of these authors. Both papers are important to the discussion of the function and meaning of literary and artistic genres, and of modes of political and ideological speech.⁵ Cooper's and Michalowski's papers also shed light on the power and influence of the respective group of functionaries/connoisseurs who are entitled and educated to interpret their media as message. To say it once again in the eighteenth-century vocabulary of court art, "the splendor of the king is necessary because he is God's governor. God, however, makes known his magnificence in all his external works" (Ulrich Koenig, court poet of king Augustus of Saxony).⁶

Splendor and magnificence also touch one aspect of the contributions by Prudence O. Harper and Pieter Meyers on Iranian precious metalwork. As valuable items, these objects served different functions. One function was as objects for lavish display, so often described in ancient sources. This "conspicuous consumption," in the words of Th. Veblen, endowed the objects with another function, that of propaganda directed towards the subjects of all ranks and classes as well as to foreign visitors. "L'étranger, attiré par le brillant de la cour," as a French patriot wrote to his king.⁷ A third function of the precious metalware can best be understood through the study of gift-exchange by M. Mauss. Most Sasanian silver vessels, for example, have been found outside Iran, perhaps the last step of a gift-exchange. Diplomatic gifts to foreign allies, as well as gifts to prompt the loyalty of feudal subjects, were produced in royal workshops and stored in palace treasuries.⁸ When Alexander looted the Achaemenid treasuries and melted down all the silver and gold for coinage, he not only brought about a serious inflation of commodity prices, but he also broke down the traditional feudal structure of the Iranian multinational army, whose allegiance to the person of the king was based on his gifts to his warriors.⁹ The extensive textile industry in early Mesopotamia may have produced goods for a similar "politics of presents." M. Lombard has described this situation for the Islamic *tiraz* factories, quoting the writer Ibn Khaldun: "The value of these gifts is in direct relation to the splendor of the empire."¹⁰

Communication through presentation and display of works of art, or valuable objects, established within a political entity a hierarchy of imitating the ruler. This imitation was not regarded as a usurpation of royal privileges but rather as a loyal duty toward the ruler.¹¹ Outside the political entity, the "acculturation of the elites"¹² was achieved through the conspicuous consumption of goods from a higher civilization, a fact that naturally fostered the differentiation of classes in the populations at the fringes of cultural centers.¹³

Communication through art—I use the term again in the ways Piotr Michalowski shows us—helps to unify and centralize an empire. Michael Roaf and Margaret Cool Root provide a wealth of information on relevant aspects of Achaemenid art, which in this respect contributed something new as it encountered different styles, motifs, and artists from the various parts of the multinational empire. Selecting styles and motifs from Neo-Assyrian models, Achaemenid art nevertheless accommodated Elamite, Greek, Scythian, and Egyptian influences. The result was to consciously create, through a highly sophisticated and sober appreciation of foreign paradigms, something genuinely Achaemenid.¹⁴ As Margaret Cool Root convinc-

ingly argues, Darius's actual response to the revolt by Gaumata and to other uprisings was to reestablish a world empire, verified by the creation of a composite, uniform, and nascent style of art. Beyond that specific purpose, Achaemenid art became so powerful that it was able even long after the end of the dynasty to influence court art from early Alexandria to Mauryan India and Augustan Rome.

From a modern perspective, we might imagine that Edith Porada's observations on animal sculptures fall somewhat outside the framework of this investigation of artistic environments. In fact, she treats one of the central themes of every early art. For example, it is well known that in the borderlands of the ancient Near East, "animal style" was not merely a form of art but a style of life, a *Weltanschauung*. This understanding, illustrated here by the example of a bronze ibex sculpture in the Sackler Gallery, can open up complex and meaningful connections between art, society, and nature. In addition, one should keep in mind that all agrarian and nomadic societies are deeply dependent on non-mechanical sources of power, i.e., animal energy. Those societies, therefore, naturally regard animals as bearers of power and magic, culminating in the species that have become symbols of royal or superhuman forces.

I will close with the truism of all commentaries of this kind: more time should have been available. Our topic was too complex and extensive to cover in one day. Research already completed on comparable aspects of ancient Egyptian art and artisans could serve as a model approach for confronting our evidence.¹⁵ Continued exploration of new avenues of research would surely enrich our picture of ancient Near Eastern art.

Notes

1. D. Metzler, *Porträt und Gesellschaft: Über die Entstehung des griechischen Porträts in der Klassik* (Münster 1971) 54–72.
2. D. Metzler, "Reichsbildung und Geschichtsbildung bei den Achämeniden," in H. G. Kippenberg, ed., *Die Entstehung der antiken Klassengesellschaft* (Frankfurt 1977) 279–312.
3. Gothofredus, *Speculum regum*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica XXII, ed. G. H. Pertz (Hannover 1872) 22.
4. U. C. Pallach, *Materielle Kultur und Mentalitäten im 18. Jahrhundert. Zum Funktionswandel des Luxus in Frankreich und im Alten Reich* (Munich 1987) 280.
5. Understanding artistic genres as functional messages was the theme of a symposium in 1986 at Bad Homburg, sponsored by the Werner-Reimers Foundation, to be published in *Visible Religion*, 1990.
6. Quoted in L. Balet and E. Gerhard, *Die Verbürgerlichung der deutschen Kunst, Literature und Musik im 18. Jahrhundert*, 2d ed. (Frankfurt, Berlin, and Vienna, 1979) 44.
7. Pallach (supra n. 4) ix. M. Sturmer, *Scherben des Glücks. Klassizismus und Revolution* (Berlin 1987) 87, on the attraction of the court art of Louis XIV all over Europe; it has its ancient counterpart in the predilection of wealthy Athenians, as well as others, for barbarian (i.e., Achaemenid) precious metalware and even glass, as the writings of Aristophanes and Demosthenes, and the Persepolis Treasury inscriptions, demonstrate. The remarkable fact that about 70 percent of the votive objects found from the eighth to sixth centuries at the Heraion of Samos are of oriental, i.e., non-Greek, origin, points in the same direction; I. Kilian-Dirimeler, *JRGZM* 32 (1985) 237, 240.
8. D. Metzler, *Ziele und Formen königlicher Innenpolitik im vorislamischen Iran* (Münster 1977) 233–44.

9. S. Bittner, *Tracht und Bewaffnung des persischen Heeres zur Zeit der Achaimeniden*, 2d ed. (Munich 1987) 316.
10. M. Lombard, *Les textiles dans le monde musulman, VII-XII siècle* (Paris and The Hague 1978) 193–99.
11. D. Metzler, *EpigAnat* 1 (1983) 9.
12. B. d'Agostino, *Annales* 32 (1977) 3, on Oriental imports in early Italy.
13. W. W. Barthold, *Zwölf Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Türken Mittelasiens* (Darmstadt 1962) 12.
14. For conscious planning in Achaemenid politics, Metzler (supra n. 8) 223 and (supra n. 2) 290.
15. H. Jucker, *Die gesellschaftliche Stellung der ägyptischen Künstler im Alten Reich* (Vienna 1959); W. Barta, *Das Selbstzeugnis eines altägyptischen Künstlers (Stele Louvre C 14)* (Berlin 1970). The respective ancient Greek attitudes are treated by H. Philipp, *Tektonon daidala* (Berlin 1986), and Hans-Peter Müller, *Die gesellschaftliche Stellung des griechischen bildenden Künstlers im 4. Jahrhundert v. u. Z.* (Diss. Leipzig 1984).

Abbreviations

AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AMIran	Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran
AnatSt	Anatolian Studies
AnalOr	Analecta Orientalia
AntCl	L'Antiquité classique
AO	Archiv Orientální
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOF	Altorientalische Forschungen
ARMT	Archives royales de Mari: textes
ArtB	Art Bulletin
BaM	Baghdader Mitteilungen
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
CAD	Chicago Assyrian Dictionary
CDAFI	Cahiers de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Iran
DialArch	Dialoghi di archeologia
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
EpigAnat	Epigraphica Anatolica
IsMEO	Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEOL	Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz
MAM	Mission Archéologique de Mari
MARI	Mari. Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires
MDIK	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft zu Berlin
OA	Oriens antiquus
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications

PF	Persepolis Fortification tablets
PT	Persepolis Treasury tablets
PropKunst	Propyläen Kunstgeschichte
RAI	Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
RAssyr	Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale
REA	Revue des études anciennes
RIM-AP	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Assyrian Periods
RLA	Reallexikon der Assyriologie
SMS	Syro-Mesopotamian Studies
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
UVB	Vorläufige Berichte, Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka
VDI	Vestnik drevnej istorii
ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie

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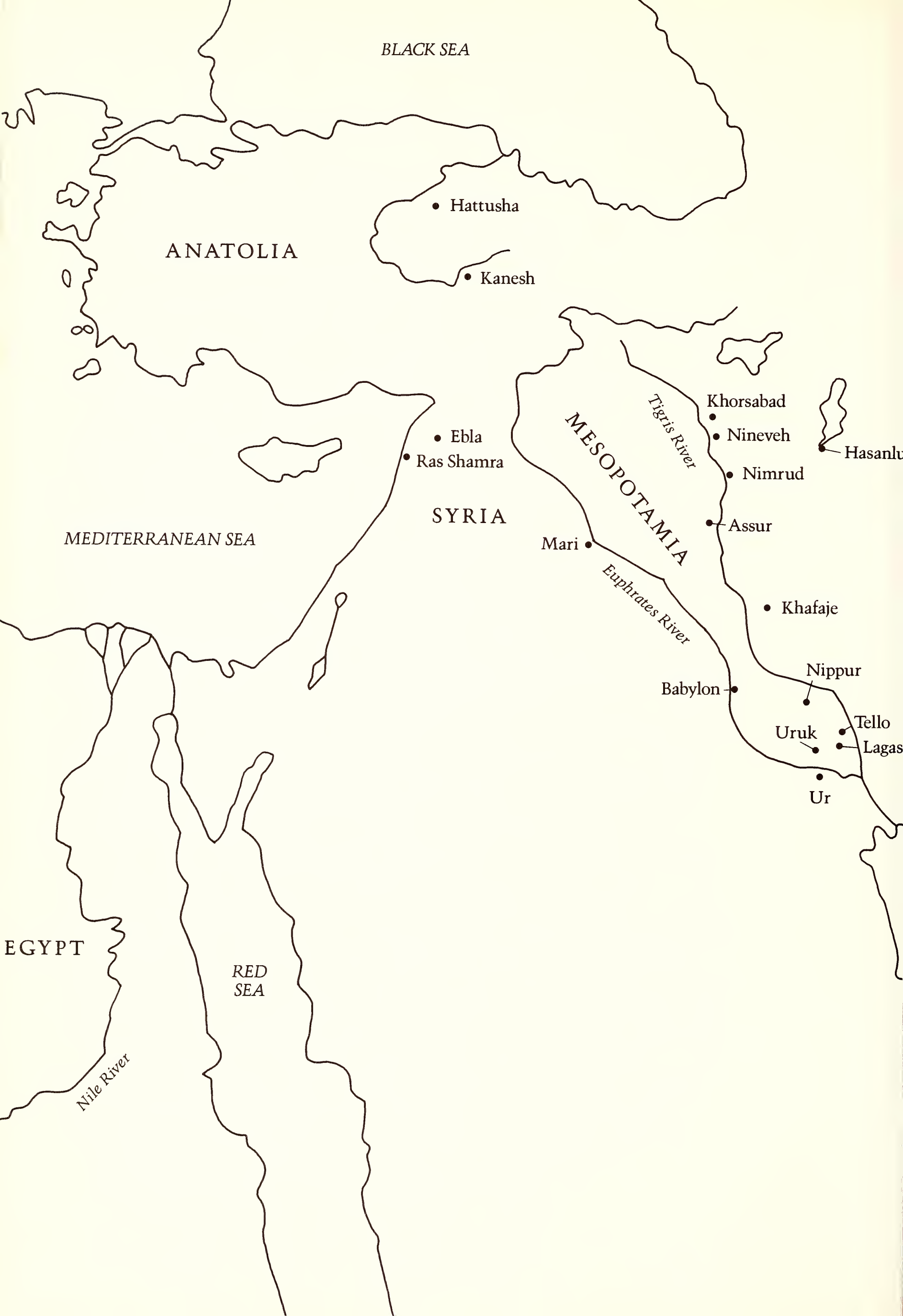
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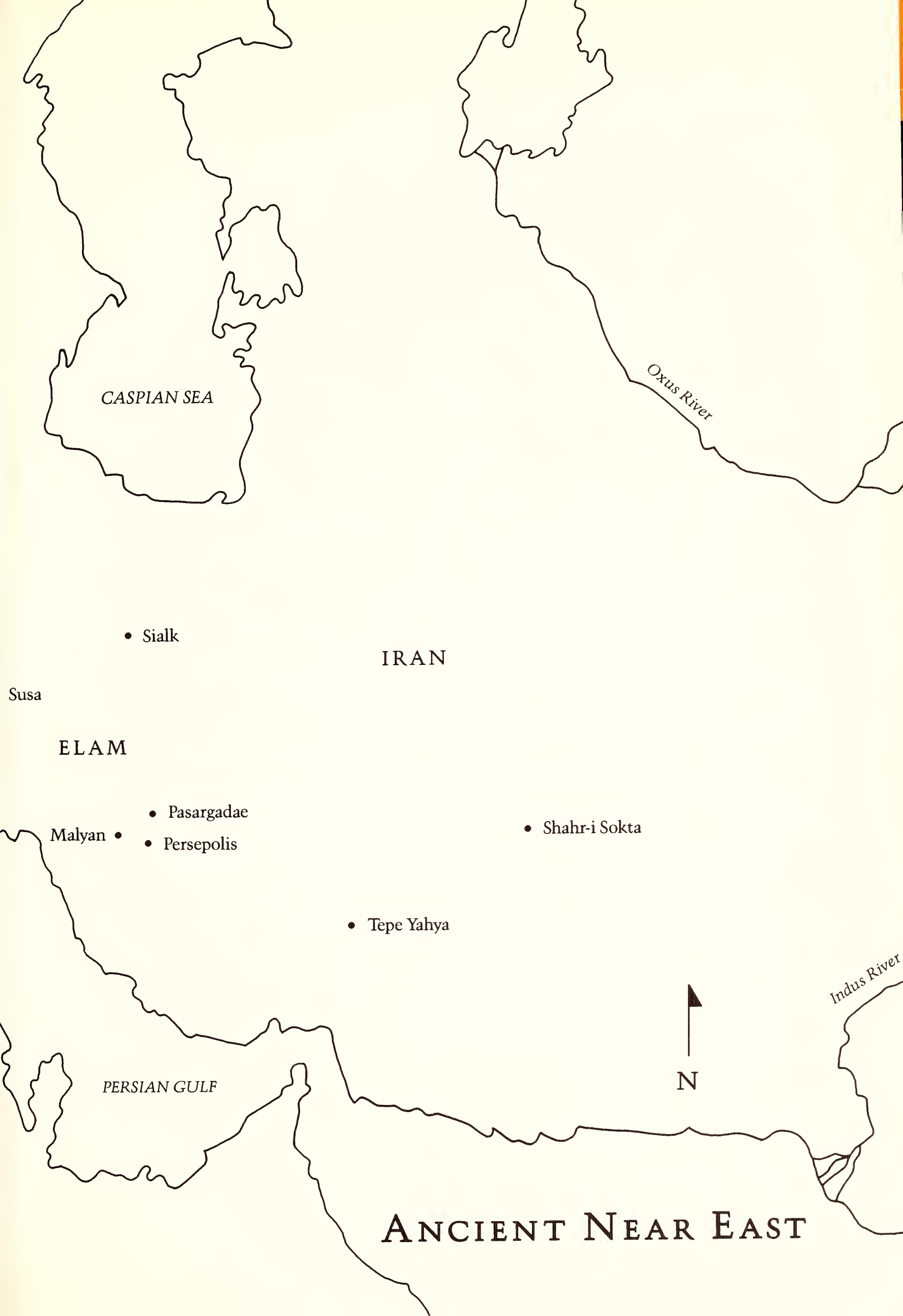
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